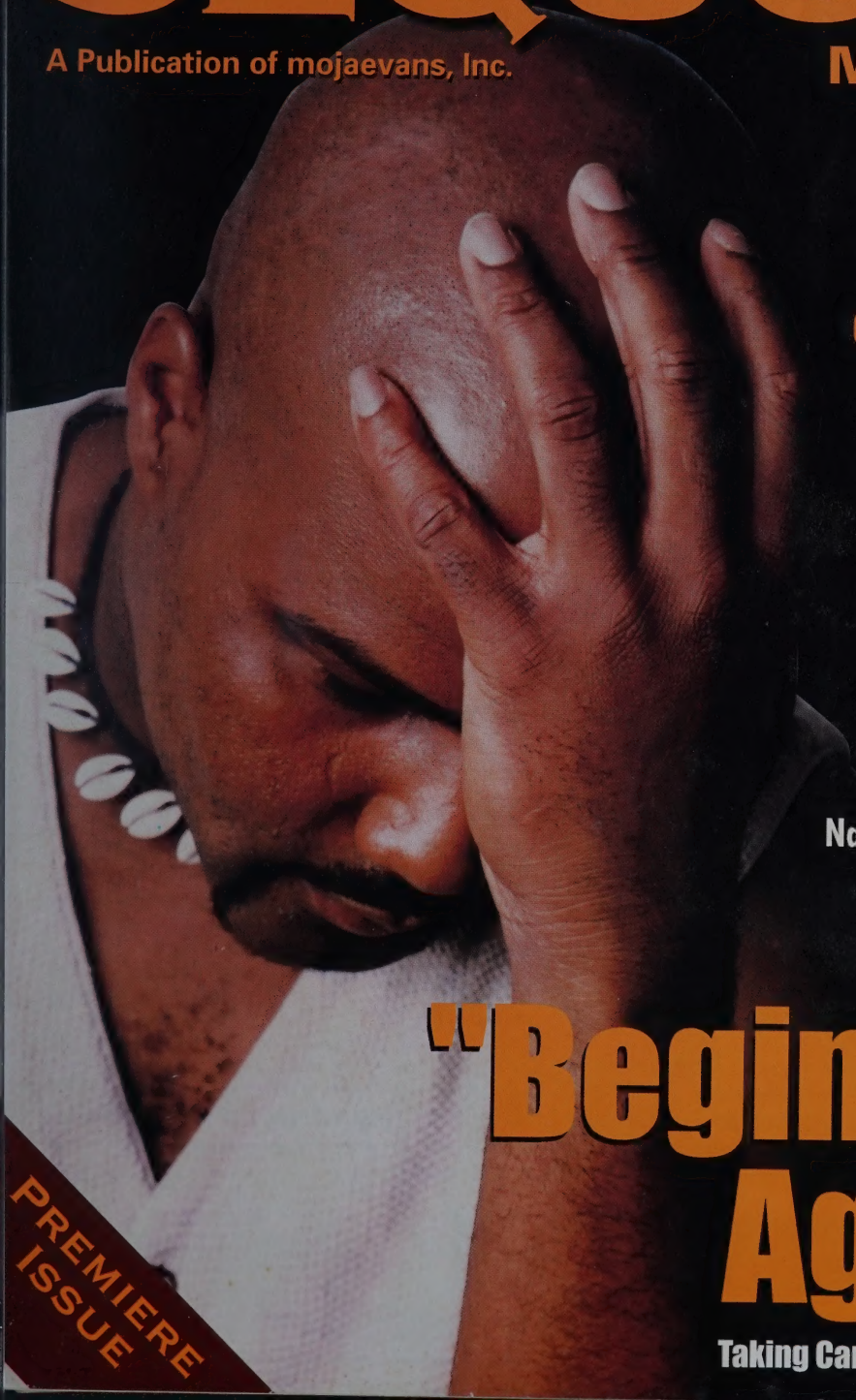
CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY, ONE BROTHER AT A TIME!

SEQUOIA MAGAZINE

A Publication of mojaevans, Inc.

FEBRUARY 2002



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Brother of the Month

UFC

Unity Fellowship Church Movement

Hot Spot of the Month

NAESM

National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities

Organization of the Month

"Beginning Again"

Taking Care of the Brotherhood

PREMIERE ISSUE

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Sequoia Magazine
Volume I, Issue I

THE MISSION:

To improve the quality of lives of same gender loving men of African descent through the printed media.

THE VISION:

To become a media resource sensitive to same gender loving men of African descent's common experiences; and to print and distribute a quality magazine where same gender loving men of African descent have a presence.

THE SLOGAN:

Connecting our community,
one brother at a time!

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Email: **mojaevans@hotmail.com**

eGroup: **sequoiamag@yahoogroups.com**

Telephone/Fax: **404-972-0300**

Mail: **Post Office Box 2624**
Decatur, Georgia 30031-2624

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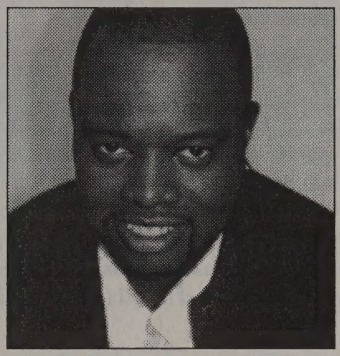
www.mojaevans.com

COVER

Photo: *Connie Cross Photography*
Design & Layout: *EM Designs Group*
Atlanta, Georgia

Inside this Issue



*The **Sequoia Magazine** interview: Montee speaks to e.Maurice Cook*

Premiere Issue's Topic:

Beginning Again

by **Jhahbriel C. E. Moore, Sr.**
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e.Maurice Cook

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National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities

HOT SPOT OF THE MONTH

Unity Fellowship Church Movement

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Dear Sequoia
10 Steps To Loving Yourself
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Want to keep up every month,
log on to **www.mojaevans.com** and SUBSCRIBE TODAY!!!

From the Publisher's Desk

Welcome to our Premiere Issue!

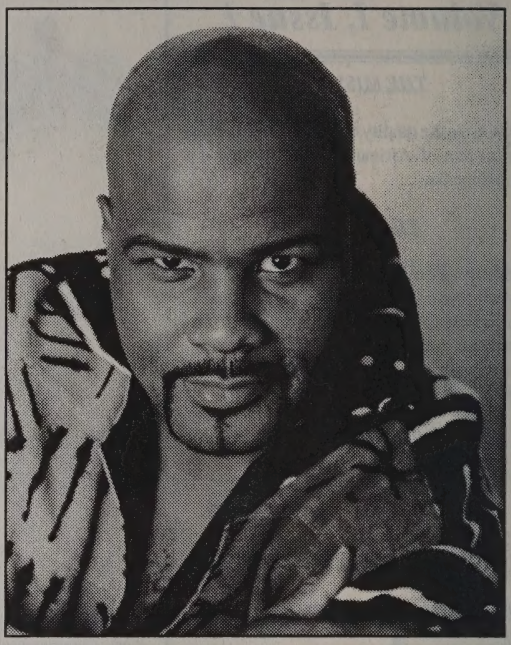
Sequoia Magazine has been a dream of mine since 1994 when I published *Black Gay News* in St. Louis, Missouri and it eventually evolving into *The DownSide Up Newsletter.* I am honored to have the opportunity to share with brothers all over the country what it means to be same gender loving men of African descent. It's about ***Empowerment!*** & ***Encouragement!*** These are the elements brothers need to fall in love with themselves.

For me, it's about brothers looking out for brothers. For too long, same gender loving brothers have worked behind the scenes to lift up people of African descent. **It's time to bring those brothers to the forefront.** I am convinced that once the community remembers that we are **THEIR** sons, brothers, fathers, uncles, grandchildren, and etc., they will begin to embrace us again.

Same gender loving brothers of African descent lives are too valuable to allow us to go unnoticed and not be spoken of. Now I know a lot of brothers are not out, and that's okay. We have to be supportive of those who are in environments that are hostile and don't make it safe for them to express themselves fully.

It is the brothers: Archbishop Carl Bean, e.Maurice Cook, and Rudolph H. Carn of the world that we honor this month and appreciate for giving us back to ourselves.

Our lives are priceless and brothers are too worthy to not give them the best of what we have and who we are. The name of our magazine comes from the redwood tree family. This is a tree that requires the roots of other tress for its survival and very existence, so it can't be planted by itself. I liken this same story to same gender loving brothers of African descent: ***our survival depends on our roots connecting***.



We have to embrace one another.

I want you to focus on the last page, "***This Is Where We Are!***" This page is dedicated to helping brothers understand, that although the work is being done, there is so much more work to do. And **WHO** better to do it than you? **WHEN** better to do it than now? and **WHERE** better to do it than here in America?

As I was working tirelessly on this issue, a good friend of mine, Donato gave me this quote when I felt like I was failing since I missed the February 2, 2002 release deadline: "*You have done so much for so long with so little, you are now capable of doing anything with nothing!*" Thanks little brother for those inspiring words that shall live with me forever.

To the brotherhood, take care of yourself and your blessings...

Your Beloved Brother,

Montee Jamal Evans

"Until there's a cure...There's BABAA!"
Serving St. Louis Metropolitan Area since 1990

Blacks Assisting Blacks Against AIDS

www.babaa.org

Three locations to serve you!

Erise Williams, Jr.
President/Chief Executive Officer

Corporate Headquarters

625 North Euclid Avenue
Suite 320
St. Louis, Missouri 63108
Tel: 314-865-1600
Fax: 314-361-6727
Mon - Fri: 8:00AM - 5:00PM

Harambee Empowerment Center for Youth

5622 Delmar Boulevard
Suite 101-103 West
St. Louis, Missouri 63112
Tel: 314-367-4488
Fax: 314-367-1088
Mon - Fri: 3:00PM - 9:00PM
Sat: 1:00PM - 5:00PM

East St. Louis, Illinois Office

6825 1/2 State Street
East St. Louis, Illinois 62203
Tel: 618-398-4590
Fax: 618-398-4587
Mon - Fri: 8:00AM - 5:00PM

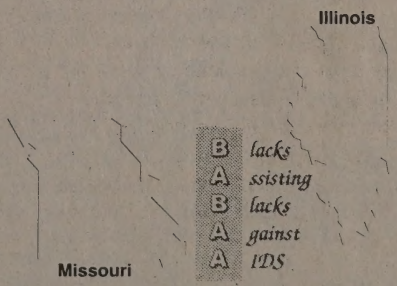
MISSION STATEMENT

To advocate, educate, and act as a resource for the St. Louis Metropolitan African American community, with particular regard to support services and resource development for individuals who are HIV challenged.

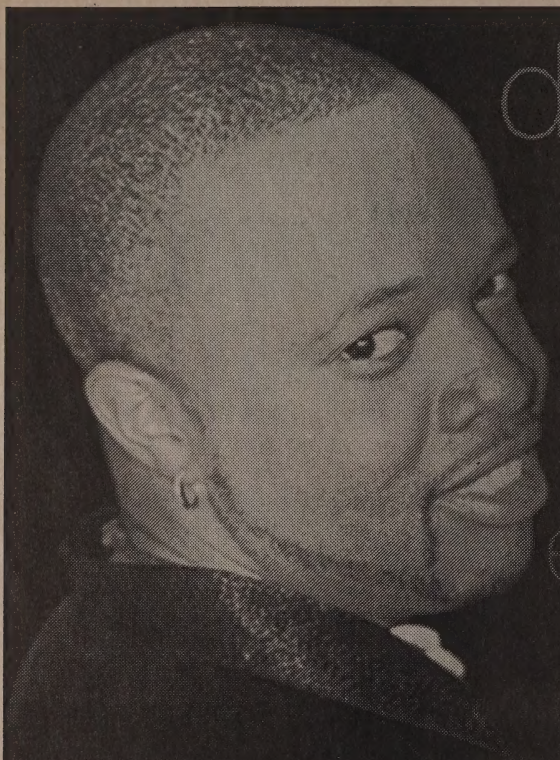
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- HIV/AIDS/STD Prevention Education and Outreach
- Case Management
- Confidential HIV and Syphilis Counseling and Testing
- Support Groups
- Capacity Building Assistance
- Quarterly Community Newsletter
- Volunteer Action Network (VAN)
- Supportive and Ancillary Referral
- Young Adult Programs & Services
- Professional Consulting Services

B A B A A



Serving the Bi-State Metropolitan Area



deacon gay
ministry
activist
designer
comedian
entrepreneur
artist d.j.

who IS e.Maurice Cook

Brother of the Month

e.Maurice Cook
Hometown: Philadelphia, PA

Sequoia Magazine *salutes Brother Cook for the contributions he has made to the growth and development of same gender loving people of African descent. This interview is a testimony to the work he has done.*

SM: Who is e.Maurice Cook?

I am a brother that cares for his community. I love to work with start up companies or organizations, because I can grow with them and build their imagery for them.

SM: Where did it all begin? My mother saw it in me when I was 10 years old. She sent me to an Art Camp in Philadelphia. I took painting classes there.

SM: Tell us about Philadelphia? Well, some parts are kind of painful. When I was eight years old, my 13 year old uncle had sex with me. I liked it. He was into art as well, and he used my love for art to exploit me to have sex with him. This went on until I was a teenager and able to fight back.

SM: So, was this your turning point to being a same gender loving brother? No, I knew around the age of six. I loved looking at my uncle naked. I liked to wrestle with guys and just enjoyed touching other boys. The funny thing for me was, when I wrestled a guy down, I would hold him down a little longer, just to be their company.

SM: So, when was your first *"real"* experience with another guy? I believe that every experience was real, my interpretation of it made the difference. I was involved in church and I had this crush

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National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities, Inc.

Atlanta, Georgia

The mission of NAESM is to educate communities of color (primarily African Americans) on the facts about HIV/AIDS through education and prevention efforts and to make health care and socioeconomic services available to people of color with early or advanced stages of HIV/AIDS regardless of their sexual orientation.

Interview w/ Rudolph H. Carn
Executive Director/CEO

SM: Why did you start NAESM? It was actually Mae Reed, Edna M. Brown, and myself. We were sitting in the living room and we knew Atlanta needed an organization that served same gender loving men of African descent.

SM: How long have you been around? We started as AESM in 1990 and once we added our national program in 1999, we added National to our name. This was to reflect the work we were charged to do in 32 states and DC.

SM: What type of services do you provide? We provide a continuum of HIV/AIDS prevention and care services. We have a department specifically centered on HIV heath education and prevention. We also have a department for those that have been impacted by HIV. At our headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, we have a food and clothing pantry.

SM: Wow, it sounds like you have a lot to deal with? It all comes with the territory of growing and understanding the needs of the community we serve.

SM: Don't you have a transition house? Oh yes, we have a 12 bed facility for African American men that are HIV positive who would otherwise be homeless.

SM: So, is prevention working? I really can't tell you right now. I truly feel that the work we do is helping to reduce the rate of HIV infection, but science has to tell us how effective we have truly been.

SM: How long will that take? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it takes approximately 10 years to prove if behavioral interventions being utilized today are working.

SM: Do we have that long to wait? No, we don't. The numbers [HIV] are way to high and steadily rising. We have challenged the CDC to find real time science based tests that will tell is if what we are doing is working.

SM: What about the recent surge of sex parties? Does that make your work difficult? Actually, I can remember sex parties back in the 70's while living in LA. There were sex parties back then, they weren't as talked about though. However, the advent of the Internet and communication systems allow easy and fast exchange of information. This has allowed more connectivity to happen in a community that is underground.

SM: What is NAESM's role regarding prevention at sex parties and on-line? Two very big questions. First, we have done outreach at sex parties held here in Atlanta. One must understand that sex parties are revenue generators for those that put them on. It's all about the money. We try and build inroads into those types of environments, but when alcohol and drugs are being consumed, it makes talking about using a condom and lube challenging.

Second, the Internet. Some guys are meeting and hooking up on-line, our organization is currently rethinking its prevention efforts in this realm. We are exploring ways to outreach via on-line. My thoughts are to go into chatrooms and create websites for brothers on-line giving them tips on how to protect themselves when meeting other brothers. I realize education is the key, we have to articulate that in a way that compliments those brothers logging on to the web.

SM: Let's talk about the rumors you have to deal with. What do you feel folk's biggest perception is of you? I know people think I am mean, evil-spirited, and all that. I'm just me. I am upfront and brutally honest. I don't have time to play games, brothers are dying. My biggest challenge is not being very political in my approach. I'm just cut from a different branch than most.

SM: So, how do you change that? I don't. If an individual has a problem or concern with me, I encourage them to pick up the phone, drop me an email, or come and see me. I will provide clarity. I can't spend my life running around trying to find out who has a problem or concern with me and who doesn't. That takes away from the work needing to be done. I have been misrepresented by past employees and folks that envy where our agency is or me as an individual. I am open to having honest dialogues with people about their concerns, as long as we can be respectful of one another.

SM: So, what keeps you going everyday? I feel good when clients call and tell us that without NAESM they would be homeless, or hungry, or doing drugs. I don't let the negativity overshadow the positives that our agency is doing.

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we must begin to trust that our validating others in their journey will in turn liberate us as individuals. This is the way we should leave the world. Lastly, it is so essential that each person develop and have a healthy sense of self-esteem.

SM: Thank you for this interview. You are so welcome, be blessed.

In a relationship, one has to know when to be the husband and when to be the wife.
--Archbishop Carl Bean

Hot Spot of the Month

Archbishop Carl Bean
Birthdate: May 26, 1944
Hometown: Baltimore, Maryland

SM: Where did life begin for you? Well, I have never been closeted. While growing up in Baltimore, I asked my mother for a baton at six years old. At 13, I was the drill major for the Elks.

SM: Who were your role models/mentors? Dr. Howard Thurman, he was the first black to explore progressive theology. He was Dr. King's teacher at Morehouse College and started a church for people of all races in San Francisco. He wanted to teach Jesus to the disinherited. Also, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., he brought the best of who he was forward and gave his life for being himself.

SM: What should same gender loving people of African descent be thinking about? Well, we should make sure that our people are given freedom from oppressive Christianity. I want people to look at the Bible in many ways and really understand the history of the writers and the time it was written.

I also want brothers, sisters, and transgenders to stand firm against anything that separates our people. We were forced to separate anything that would stop the process of individual liberation. We must now challenge and return to those things that we were led to believe was wrong.

SM: How did your life evolve? Well, I was a gay man that worked with gospel music and choirs. I was closeted back then. I would write songs, despite my personal pain because I loved the Black Church.

SM: Do you have a special person in your life? I am married to the Church, it provides me everything I need.

SM: Tell us about your song, "Born This Way." Well, Barry Gordy from Motown called me and told me that they needed a disco song. They knew I did gospel, yet they wanted a song that spoke to our experiences as same gender loving people of African descent. So, in 1977 I recorded the song and it was released in 1978.

SM: Any last words. Yes, let us learn to accept each other wherever we are at this point in our life's journey. We must realize that our greatest pain has come from our childhood experiences. In order to find healing,

Archbishop Carl Bean, FOUNDER

God is Love,
and Love Is For Everyone

CHURCH MOTTO

5148 West Jefferson Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90016
(323) 938-8322
www.unityfellowshipchurch.org

Information Corner

Discussion Groups for Brothers

Afro Chat
San Francisco, California
415-487-8018

Black Gay Male Discussion Group
Miami, Florida
305-672-0865

Brothas Speak
Tampa, Florida
813-236-8809

Brother to Brother
Brooklyn, New York
718-230-0770

Brother's United Network of Tennessee
Nashville, Tennessee
615-259-4866, ext. 169

COLOURS, Inc.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
215-496-0330

GAMBA
Chicago, Illinois
312-986-0661

Gay Men of African Descent
New York, New York
212-828-1697

Let's Rap Brother
Inglewood, California
310-674-4444

My Brothers Keeper
Phoenix, Arizona
602-253-2437

Second Sunday of Atlanta
Atlanta, Georgia
404-523-7500

SMAAC
Oakland, California
510-834-9582

The Brother's Circle
St. Louis, Missouri
314-367-4488

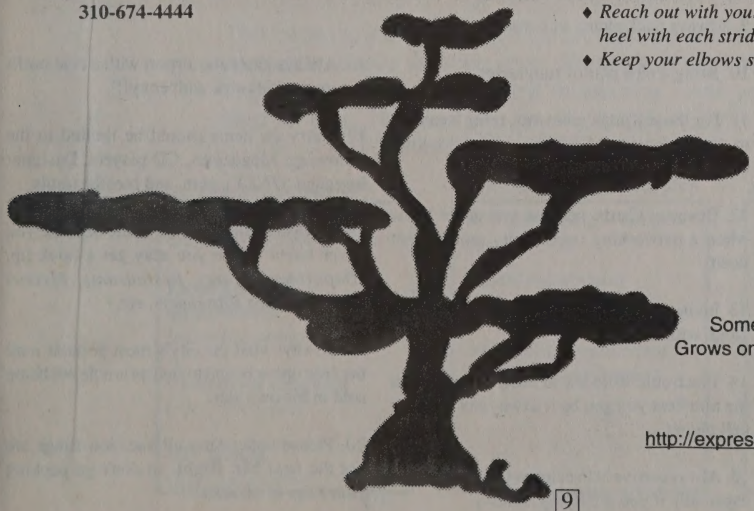
The Men's Gathering
Houston, Texas
713-528-4461

Unity Fellowship Church
Los Angeles, California
323-938-8322

Us Helping Us
Washington, DC
202-546-8200

Young Brothers Exchange
Los Angeles, California
310-419-1961

Youth Discussion Group
Chicago, Illinois
312-986-0661



WALKING BLOOPERS

When it comes to fitness walking, do what comes naturally. Many brothers lapse into less-than-perfect tendencies that keep them from achieving greater fitness or enjoying walking to its fullest. Are you making these slips?

1. You stretch first. Do it after walking for five to ten minutes, or at the end of your walk. You'll find warmed-up muscles stretch more easily and safely. Stretching pays off in speed, grace, and less risk of soreness and injury.

2. You wear the wrong shoes. They can create shin and heel pain, knee strain, blisters and other problems. Investing in quality, properly fitted walking shoes is critical for fitness walking.

3. You don't walk far or fast enough. If you're walking for fitness and weight loss, you need to increase distance or speed, or both, when you're ready for it. The key is keeping your heart rate moderately elevated.

4. You take giant steps. Big strides can stress your calf muscles and hyper-extend your knees. Let your leg motion be smooth and natural, with the heel striking first; push off with your toes at the end of each step.

Watch your posture...

- *Walk tall, looking forward*
- *Keep your head up and shoulders back*
- *Take quick, comfortable steps*
- *Reach out with your hip, knee and heel with each stride*
- *Keep your elbows slightly bent*

Don't...

- *Slouch*
- *Sashay your hips*
- *Arch your lower back*
- *Swing your arms like a windmill*
- *Flap your elbows like chicken wings*

SEQUOIA TREE FACTS

Height: 250 - 300 feet
(*taller than the Statue of Liberty*)
Weight: 4,000 tons
Age: 1,500 to 3,000 years
Volume: 30,000 to 50,000 cubic feet

Sometimes called the *big tree* or *Sierra redwood*
Grows only in Sierra Nevada mountains of California

For more info, log on to:

http://express.howstuffworks.com/noway-trees.htm

Celebrating Our Pride

There are 30+ same gender loving people of African descent pride festivities happening around the country a year. Here, you will find information on those happening in 2002 (*that we know about*).

Sequoia Magazine will keep you informed of Black Pride Festivities and we'll even cover some of these events as well.

Feel free to email us at ***mojaevans@hotmail.com*** with your Black Pride schedule of events.

April

Houston Splash
Philadelphia Black Gay Pride

May

DC Black Gay Pride

June

Oakland Black Pride
San Francisco SOUL of Pride
Tampa Jamz
North Carolina Black Pride

July

Chicago Black Pride
Windy City Black LGBT Pride
At The Beach (LA Pride)
Detroit Hotter Than July Black Pride

August

NYC Black Gay Pride
St. Louis Black Gay Pride
Cleveland Black Gay Pride
Kansas City Black Gay Pride
Minneapolis/St. Paul Black LGBT Pride

September

Atlanta: Labor Day Weekend
Dallas Black Gay Pride

Black Pride Travel Do's & Don'ts

Brought to you by: www.houstonsplash.com/top20.htm

1. Always view the weather conditions of your destination city and pack accordingly.

2. When packing, remember whatever you pack you may have to carry a distance further than your bedroom to the car parked outside.

3. Get on the Internet and map out directions to your various hot spots before your trip, in order to prevent you from getting lost in unfamiliar cities.

4. Pack at least two outfits showcasing your best assets... (*Whether it be those pecs, your bust line, arms, legs, etc.*)

5. Never pack more than two outfits per day.

6. One should never leave home without a sexy swimsuit.

7. At least one ***Bourgeois***, ***GRAND*** or ***CHURCH*** outfit for those ghetto fabulous /Fu Fu Events!!

8. Pedicure, Manicure, Lip Gloss or Chapstick, Need I say more?

9. Always pack plenty of condoms & lube.

10. Bring a nice pair of sunglasses.

11. For those Kodak moments, bring a camera to take pictures of all those fine looking brothers.

12. Business Cards, because you never know when a networking opportunity will present itself.

13. Invite a good Judy (*i.e. friend*) or buddy to laugh with the entire trip.

14. Electronic Rolodex in order to type in all the numbers you get, be it a two-way pager or cell phone.

15. Always arrive at the airport two hours early, especially if you are flying standby.

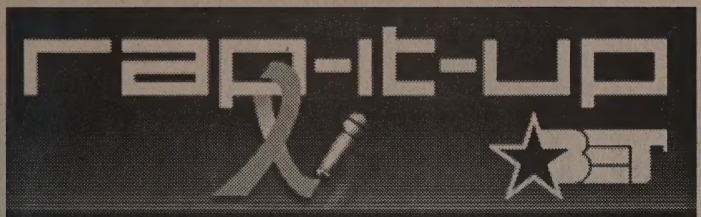
16. Always grace the airport with a cute outfit to turn the kids sick with envy!!!

17. Carry on items should be limited to the following: Magazines, CD players, Designer Luggage (***ONLY***), gum, and breathe mints.

18. Always flash that killer smile because you never know where you may get a hook up. (*Department Stores, Restaurants, Airport Ticket Counter, Bartenders, etc.*)

19. Always visit the city's most popular mall because one is bound to find an article not being sold in his own state.

20. Please understand all vacation flings are not the next **Mr. Right**, so don't go packing your bags to relocate!!!



RIGHT NOW,
education is one of our best weapons against **AIDS**. There is no cure for **AIDS**.
The only way to stop the spread of **HIV** is to **RAP-IT-UP** and know the **FACTS**.
www.rap-it-up.com

STATISTICS

HIV is the leading cause of death for African Americans **ages 25 – 44**.

Although African-Americans only represent an estimated 12% of the U.S. population, they make up **almost half (47%) of new AIDS cases**.

The rate of reported AIDS cases among African-Americans is **more than 9 times** the case rate among whites and more than twice the rate among Latinos.

1 in 50 African American men have HIV+.

Young African Americans make up 60% of new AIDS cases among teens ages 13-19.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

It's as simple as

www.mojaevans.com

LOG ON - CONNECT - SUBSCRIBE

Health-Timer

The following are screening tests brothers generally have as part of regular physicals, based on their age. Brothers at high risk for some diseases might consider more frequent monitoring. Ask your physician what is best for you. We want you healthy and fit in 2002.

BROTHERS IN THEIR 20'S

Testicle self-examination
(*every two to three months*)

Blood pressure measurement
(*every two years*)

Cholesterol screening
(*every five years*)

HIV testing
(*if sexually active*)

BROTHERS IN THEIR 30's & 40'S

Add everything to the left, plus:

Digital rectal exam
(*annually, if over 40*)

Watch for diabetes; blood test of symptoms present

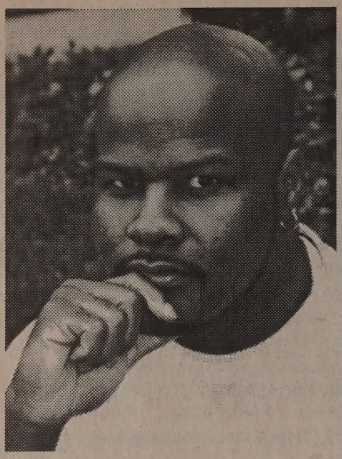
BROTHERS IN THEIR 50's & OLDER

Add everything to the left, plus:

Fecal occult blood test
(*annually*)

Sigmoidoscopy
(*every 3 to 5 years, at the discretion of a physician*)

PSA Test
(*annually*)



"Brothers, please understand that falling down is only a failure if you don't get up and begin again." -- **Montee Jamal Evans**

"Beginning Again"

At the beginning of every year, many brothers make resolutions to change, to do things differently, better, somehow to improve their lives.

Each year we begin again and again, starting over making the same mistakes we did the previous year. This is a good time to reflect on where we have been, where we want to go, and some of the things that are preventing us from getting there.

In thinking about this topic, I discovered some interesting things. Achieving anything in life is very difficult under the best of circumstances. When you are African American, or any other minority for that matter, it is even more difficult. And if you are a same gender loving (SGL) brother of African descent, there can be another level of difficulty on top of that.

You would think that these facts would be very discouraging for people trying to better themselves, but I will share some examples with you of people who would not let anything stand in their way to achieving their goals and ambitions, despite the incredible odds.

It really is quite phenomenal what SGL Brothers are capable of doing. From the early 1600's when we first arrived in America, we have struggled and fought for everything we have acquired up to this point in history.

Through slavery; through the civil rights movement; and through the everyday battles we fight today; SGL Brothers have demonstrated time and time again that they can overcome adversity and rise to the top. Yes, it is 2002 and we are still fighting to get ahead. And despite this, we continue to make our mark just like our brothers who paved the way.

The same hammer that shatters the glass forges the steel.
-- Marcus Garvey

As a first example, let us consider Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806), who received what amounted to an eighth grade education. Banneker was 59 years old when he studied astronomy, mathematics and science. He was self-taught, borrowing books from George Ellicott, to learn astronomy. It is a well known fact that he was a SGL Brother, and despite all Benjamin went through, he published the first almanac and sent it to the Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, along with a letter protesting the prevailing government belief that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites.

Abolitionist used the almanacs as evidence that blacks were capable of superior intellect. Benjamin Banneker proved that it is never too late to learn and he used his knowledge to help his people move ahead.

We don't even have to go as far back as Banneker. Today, we have several openly SGL Brothers that are examples of the struggles and successes we deal with in the new millennium.

One particular struggle is being black and SGL in corporate America. According to *Forward Communications*, a national consulting firm, research has proven that there is not one openly SGL Brother serving as a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a Fortune 500 company. Perhaps they

do exist, but they are not out because of the fear of jeopardizing their career.

There are, however, many openly SGL SGL Brothers that serve as senior managers and executives below the level of the CEO, and their stories offer much hope that one day soon we will see a CEO who is SGL.

"The Black homosexual is hard pressed to gain audience among his heterosexual brothers; even if he is more talented, he is inhibited by his silence or his admissions. This is what the race has depended on in being able to erase homosexuality from our recorded history.

The "chosen" history. But these sacred constructions of silence are futile exercises in denial. We will not go away with our issues of sexuality. We are coming home."

-- Essex Hemphill

As an example, Ronald L. Moore decided to come out professionally when he moved to Atlanta, Georgia, to become the General Manager of Hewlett Packard. He is one of the highest-ranking, open and out SGL Brothers at a Fortune 500 company. One statement he made that really stands out is; "*The key aspect of success in corporate America is that you have to have a plan. You have to be able to analyze your career forward and backwards, outlining a strategy for what kinds of responsibility you want to undertake and what kind of impact you want to have with your particular company. For black employees, you have to be willing to work with and trust your non-black colleagues to succeed.*" Moore's success at HP has not been hampered in any way by his being SGL.

Rodney Gooden is a Senior Project Manager at R.R. Donnelly, the international publishing conglomerate in Chicago, Illinois. He is part of the new generation of SGL Brothers serving as executives. He states that when R.R. Donnelly recruited him, they rolled out the red carpet for him and his partner. Everyone at the company knows he is SGL, and his career is more successful than many would have expected under the circumstances.

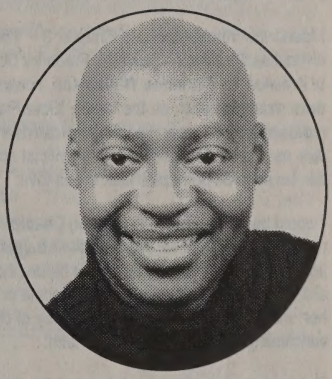
There are examples of successful SGL Brothers of African descent in all kinds of industries and sectors, be it the corporate world, the entertainment world, or the scientific research world.

Sometimes we are our own worst enemy. We don't look out for each other, or help each other get jobs, or help with the community. Can you believe that in 2002 there are brothers who can't read or write, let alone try to gain employment? There are even brothers who can't read the directions on their medication bottles. Is it too much to ask that some of our strong, intelligent SGL Brothers start a literacy program for young SGL Brothers? Where are the brothers volunteering to build structured programs that will help to prepare resumes, prepare for interviews, demonstrate proper attire and etiquette?

It is noted that we are strong brothers and we have overcome many struggles. Some obstacles we are presently dealing with include our sexual nature, trying to gain the respect we deserve, and wanting to be treated like any heterosexual in America.

One of the strangest things is that SGL Brothers still have not come together as a unified community, supporting each other and helping each other move forward. Our grandfathers would describe this behavior as "*crabs in a bucket*", scratching, clawing, and climbing over each other to get out, with no regard for the welfare of others.

We need to be the fingers in a hand to form that mighty fist that will enable us to get ahead in life. This fist will overcome the prejudice that we fight against everyday. We need to show each other another level of "**BROTHERLY**



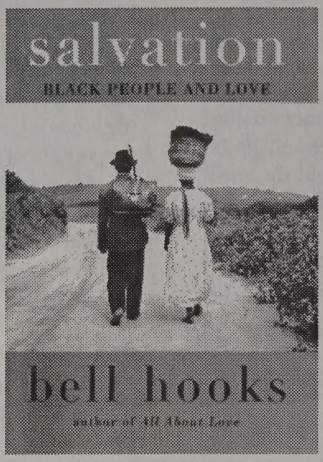
FEBRUARY'S THEME TOPIC WRITER:

Jhahbriel C. E. Moore, Sr.
Atlanta, Georgia
Email: *jhahrule@aol.com*
Birthdate: *May 19, 1972*
B.A. in Business Administration, Washington State University

continued on page 20

NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC:

"BRIDGING THE GAP IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY"

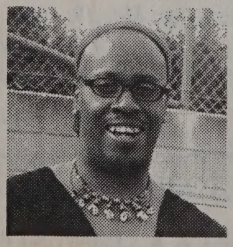


While reading **Salvation: Black People and Love** by bell hooks, I thought to myself, you're preaching to the choir. Then I realized one should always take the opportunity to be reminded about love. hooks breaks her book down in chapters focusing on specific topics. This makes it easy for the reader to pinpoint subject matter that is of particular interest to them.

I found the Introduction and Chapter 3 – ***The Issue of Self-Love*** most fulfilling. Using references as diverse as the slave narratives of Frederick Douglas and Harriet Tubman to the more recent "*The Healing of America*" by **Marianne Williamson**. hooks gives tremendous credence to her views. hooks expertly uses examples such as the movie "*Soul Food.*" Specifically, she talks of the "mama" character that represents an icon most people of African descent can recognize as the epitome of love. Yet this character dies as a result of diabetes. Her sacrificial act of giving love to everyone yet neglecting her own health can be seen as perhaps a lack of self-love.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Chapter 10 – ***Embracing Gayness*** **(her word y'all).** Again hooks calls for the reader to examine their baggage concerning this topic. She speaks of a tolerance of homosexuality among black people before the Black Power Movement. All of us understand there have always been Same Gender Loving people in our families and communities. hooks does not stray from her challenge. She notes the hypocrisy of the black church using the talents of SGL people but not welcoming them into the family of faith.

The final chapter of the book ***Loving Justice*** quotes Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, "*Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.*" hooks completes her book by writing, "*The individuals who are a part of that beloved community are already in our lives. We do not need to search for them. We can start where we are. We begin our journey with love, and love will always bring us back to where we started. Making the choice to love can heal our wounded spirits and our body politic. It is the deepest revolution, the turning away from the world as we know it, toward the world we must make if we are to be one with the planet – one healing heart giving and sustaining life. Love is our hope and our salvation.*" To this I say, **And So It Is!!**



Jair lives in Los Angeles, California.

He works for the Los Feliz Branch of the LA Public Library. He is actively pursuing the completion of the manuscript for his novel "***House Divided***" and the publication of a book of poems titled "***In the Garden***". He is Co-Founder and Co-Coordinator of the Lorde-Baldwin Adult Reading Project an outreach ministry of ***Unity Fellowship Church - Los Angeles***. He can be reached by e-mail at: ***funkydreads@blackplanet.com***

DJ Ron C
Chicago, Illinois

http://communities.msn.com/
THEDJRONCDISCOPAGE

10. - I've Lost Control
Sleezy D
9. - I Can't Turn Around
Isaac Hayes
8. - Blackout (*Any version*)
Lil' Louis
7. - Cold World
(*The Unreleased Version*)
Jamie Principle
6 & 5. - Out of Work, Need a Job
Jesse Gould
4. - Can't Stop
ISH
3. - I Don't Want You Back
Ramona Brooks
2. - Optimo
Liquid Liquid
1. - Bad Luck
Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes

House
Deep House
Gospel House
R & B
Hip Hop

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www.gospelhousemusic.com
www.garagehousemusic.com
www.pojirecords.com
www.dcsanctuary.com

... and many more to come

HORROR SCOPE

February 2002 Horror Scope

Sequoia Magazine communed with the stars for astrological purposes, below are the results.

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

Aquarians are the language of love. "This month it ain't happening child! Stop pushing and let your eyes express your true intentions.

Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

This month focus on the simple things in life. "Stop trying to be Vanna Trump and focus on being you"! Save the mink for the right occasion, not for your sista's birthday party where they are serving pizza and beer.

Aries (March 21 - April 19)

*This month will be an adventurous one for you. In other words, "Keep writing those checks and knowing your account has been closed for a year. The adventure will be a long trip to **OZ** with matching silver bracelets.*

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

Different strokes for different folks Taurus. Just because you don't like your best friend's new boyfriend doesn't mean he isn't suppose to like him. Stop worrying, he will find a job and get those teeth fixed.

Gemini (May 21 - June 21)

Gemini, you shiny happy QUEEN! That's right, this month everything is going your way. Let your individuality shine. Stop following those children in dark places. Go by yourself!

Cancer (June 22 - July 22)

*Take time for both. This month you have to stop being that "**Wall Flower**" and get out more. You can still have your private time as well. Those special movies you watch are still going to be there when you get home.*

Leo (July 23 - August 22)

This month you should focus on not being very popular. Next time, don't leave your underwear in well traveled territories. That ain't cute boyfriend!

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

This month show those true leadership skills. Don't let him lead, you make him follow. It's time to stop playing Ms. Bottom and become Mr. Top. Versatility is a wonderful thing in 2002.

Libra (September 23 - October 23)

There will be some hard decisions you will have to make this month. "Child, either deal with his drama or just let that brother go! Stop overanalyzing.

Scorpio (October 24 - November 21)

Can you avoid money this month boyfriend! Child, face it, what is more important? Those $500 alligator pumps, or having somewhere to live? Get into it!

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

Relationship elevator going up! That's right boo, this month you might want to spend less time with the extras and more time with your man. (If you know what I mean) LEAVE THE OTHERS ALONE!!!

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

This month child, please focus on your health. That's right! Those 34's ain't working any more for you. When you started developing that Weenie Doo (When your belly goes further out than your weenie doo) it just ain't cute.

Recipe of the Month

Baked Stuffed Flounder

Ingredients:

1/2 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped green onions with tops
1 glove garlic - minced
8 tablespoons butter
1 cup bread crumbs
4 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 pound boiled shrimp - chopped
1/2 pound lump crabmeat
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 egg - slightly beaten
black pepper or cayenne (or both)
salt to taste
4 flounders, medium size

Sauté celery, onions and garlic in melted butter over low heat. **Add** bread crumbs, crabmeat, shrimp, parsley and egg and mix well. **Season** with salt and pepper. **Split** the thick side of the flounder lengthwise and widthwise, **loosen** the meat from the bone of the fish to form a pocket for stuffing. **Brush** well with melted butter and lemon juice. **Salt, pepper and stuff** the pocket. **Place** in a pan with enough water to cover the bottom of the pan. **Broil** 3" from heat until the fish flakes easily with a fork. **Baste** frequently with the liquid in the pan.

brought to you by...

SoulFoodCookbook
www.SoulFoodCookbook.com

*Would you like to be a guest in Montee's home to taste this month's recipe? Email him at **mojaevans@hotmail.com***

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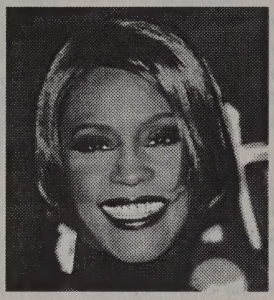
Brothers love...

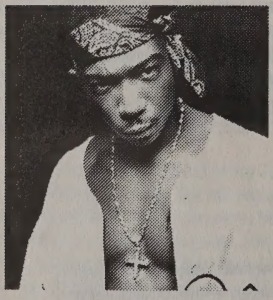
Aaliyah Dana Haughton
January 16, 1979
Brooklyn, New York
www.aaliyah.com



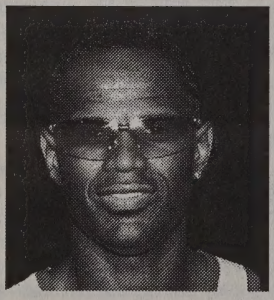
Whitney Elizabeth Houston
August 6, 1963
Newark, New Jersey
www.whitney-fan.com

Kimberly Jones
July 11, 1975
Brooklyn, New York
www.lilkim.com

Patti LaBelle
May 24, 1944
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
www.pattilabelle.com



Jeffrey Atkins
February 29, 1976
Hollis, Queens, New York
www.jarule.net



Brian McKnight
June 5, 1969
Buffalo, New York
www.brian-mcknight.com

Elgin Baylor Lumpkin
October 15, 1975
Washington, DC
www.ginuwine.com

Usher Raymond
October 14, 1978
Chattanooga, Tennessee
www.usherworld.com

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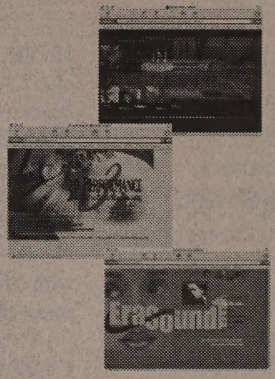

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HOT WEB SITES

Sequoia Magazine searched the Internet to find websites that would help brothers understand how vast a community we really are.

Type in **WWW.** and:

advocate.com
aen.org
africana.com
arealread.org
arisemag.com
atlantablackpride.com
babaa.org
balmingilead.org
biresource.org
blackaids.org
blackamericaonline.com
black-collegian.com
blackradicalcongress.com
blackradio.net
blackstripe.com
blk.com
clubrimshot.com
devry.edu
chocolatecityusa.com
ebonymale.com
emdesignsgroup.com
gay.com
gayhealth.com
gmad.org
hrc.org
inthelifeatl.com
livedlife.com
melanet.com
minorityoutreach.org
moyopress.com
naesmonline.org
nmac.org
nubianknights.com
outlineschicago.com/blacklines
planetout.com
tbwt.com
tpan.com
ubp.com
unityfellowshipchurch.org
venusmagazine.com
washblade.com
youthhiv.org

Do you have a website for us to put on our website? Email us at *mojaevans@hotmail.com*

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www.mojaevans.com

FOR MY OWN PROTECTION

By Essex Hemphill

I want to start an organization
to save my life.
If whales, snails, dogs, cats
Chrysler and Nixon can be saved,
the lives of Black men are priceless
and can be saved.

We should be able to save each other.
I don't want to wait for the Heritage Foundation
to release a study saying
Black people are almost extinct.
I don't want to be the living dead
pacified with drugs, sex and rock-n-roll.
If a human chain can be formed
around nuclear missile sites,
then surely Black men can form
human chains around Anacostia, Harlem,
South Africa, Wall Street, Hollywood,
each other.

If we have to take tomorrow with blood
are we ready?
Do our S curls and dreadlocks and phillies
make us any more ready than a bush or
conkaline?
I'm not concerned
about the attire of a soldier.
All I want to know
for my own protection
is are we capable
of whatever
whenever.

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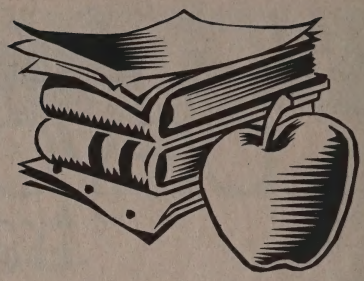

Sequoia's Book/Birthday Club Rules

HAVE YOU EVER thought about starting a book/birthday club? Are you **INTERESTED** in meeting more intellectual brothers? Do you live in an area where it's **HARD FOR BROTHERS TO COME TOGETHER** for social activities?

Montee has come up with some interesting rules for a group of twelve brothers to come together monthly, break bread with one another, and one brother walks away monthly with some change in his pocket.

Check this out, email him at *mojaevans@hotmail.com* and let him know how it works out.

Identify twelve **brothers** that like to read.

Each **brother** selects a book for the group to read.

Each **brother** chooses a month that they will host a meeting at their home, a local coffee shop, or etc., preferably their birthday month.

Each **brother** brings a dish or a small amount of money to eat (*if public place chosen*).

Here's the money part:

Each brother brings ***$25 - $50*** (*group decides*)
to every book/birthday club meeting.

Depending on the schedule agreed upon in the beginning, the brother whose birthday falls in the month the meeting is held will get the pot of money.

Even if a brother does not attend,
they are still responsible for turning in money -- **Good Luck!!!**

10 Steps To Loving Yourself

by Montee Jamal Evans

1. ***Stop all criticism***: Criticism never changes a thing. Refuse to criticize yourself. Accept yourself exactly as you are. When you criticize, your changes are negative. When you approve of yourself, your changes are positive. Don't be so hard on yourself!

2. ***Don't scare yourself***: Stop terrorizing yourself with your thoughts. It's a dreadful way to live. Find a mental image that gives you pleasure, and immediately switch your scary thought to a pleasure thought.

3. ***Be gentle and kind and patient:*** Be gentle with yourself. Be kind to yourself. Be patient with yourself as you learn the new ways of thinking. Treat yourself as you would someone you really loved. The one person you have to be around all the time is the one you see in the mirror.

4. ***Be kind to your mind:*** Self hatred is only hating your own thoughts. Don't hate yourself for having the thoughts. Gently change your thoughts. Your mind is allowed to wander because that is the benefit of having objectivity in thinking.

5. ***Praise yourself:*** Criticism breaks down the inner spirit. Praise builds it up. Praise yourself as much as you can. Tell yourself how well you are doing with every little thing. Don't wait on anyone else to recognize the good in you, after you recognize yourself, who else matters?

6. ***Support yourself:*** Find ways to support yourself. Reach out to friends and allow them to help you. You are being strong when you can ask for help when you need it. When you are faced with a difficult subject, help is just a phone call, email, or visit away. Reach out if you have to.

7. ***Be loving to your negatives:*** Acknowledge that you created them to fulfill them. If you do not like something about yourself that is negative, let it go. The way to get ahead of negative factors in our life is to release them when we identify them.

8. ***Take care of your body:*** Learn about nutrition. What kind of fuel does your body need to have optimum energy and vitality? Learn about exercise. Cherish and revere the temple you live in and treat it right. You are all you have at the end of the day.

9. ***Mirror work:*** Look into your eyes often. Express this growing sense of love you have for yourself. Forgive yourself looking into the mirror. Talk to your family members or friends looking into the mirror. At least once a day, tell yourself in the mirror, "I LOVE YOU!"

10. ***Love yourself:*** Begin it now. Do the best you can. All you have to do is recognize the beauty you have inside of yourself and bring it forward. Love must begin at home before it can spread abroad. When was the last time you took yourself on a date?

Yahoo! Groups to Join

Log on to these websites, read the group/club profile and click to join if it works for you.

www.mojaevans.com

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Connecting our community, one brother at a time!

These are Yahoo! **GROUPS**
First, type in the following line:

http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/

and then put the line below behind the slash

aamuaa
AfricansGayForum
blackmaleagenda
BMSAN
MatureBlackGayMen
MatureBlackMenForLTR
samegenderlovingblackfolks
sequoiamag
ymsmtg

These are Yahoo! **CLUBS**
First, type in the following line:

http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/

and then put the line below behind the slash

africanamericanglbtevents
blackrainbowatlanta
consciousgayblackmen
themensgathering
spiritofblackgaymen
worshipblackmen

Bold denotes that Montee is a member of these groups.

continued from page 13

SUPPORT". By this I mean, we lack the desire to help one another even when we have the means to do so.

There is so much we could be and should be doing. Those who made it and accomplished the things or jobs they wanted, too often forget about the ones who are still trying to get there. Instead of offering help, assistance, or advice, our brothers turn their heads as if they forgot where they came from. There is no way we are ever going to make it, if we don't pull together and overcome things like jealousy, animosity, or pride.

Everybody can be great
because everybody can serve.
-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Over the course of history, especially the history of SGL Brothers, many have managed to get ahead in life and it is no secret to how they accomplished their success. Hard work, good friends, and family as well as a burning desire to succeed. We possess all the tools to succeed in whatever endeavour we set out to accomplish. No matter how many times we begin again we should always strive to make our lives better. What we need on top of that is each other.

"The Black homosexual is hard pressed to gain audience among his heterosexual brothers; even if he is more talented, he is inhibited by his silence or his admissions. This is what the race has depended on in being able to erase homosexuality from our recorded history.
The "chosen" history. But these sacred constructions of silence are futile exercises in denial. We will not go away with our issues of sexuality. We are coming home."
-- Essex Hemphill

In conclusion, I hope we can resolve to be better brothers to ourselves and one another. As brothers, we should already be proud of what we have accomplished thus far.

Brothers stand strong against what you know isn't true. We are strong black men making a positive change in 2002.

It is our duty to conserve our physical powers, our intellectual endowments, and our spiritual ideas.
-- W.E.B. DuBois

Dear Sequoia?

I don't feel comfortable using a condom, it doesn't give me the same feeling as hitting it "raw." What should I do?

Baby, let me tell you -- your "*life*" depends on you getting over this. The one thing that has worked well for me and my man is him masturbating with a condom on until he started feeling better about it. He wasn't going to get none, if he didn't work this out. In all sincerity, condoms HAVE to be used during intercourse at all times, it just takes some getting use to.

What should I do when a brother I meet and perceives as the "top" turns out to be a "bottom" in the bedroom? I only like "top" dawgs.

You should have had this conversation before the bedroom door closed. But, since you're right there in the moment and "**your**" perception or **he presented himself** wrong, the best thing I would suggest is try being a "top" dawg for once in your life - OR - kindly let the brother know that you "prefer" him to be Tyrone tonight and you'll be Sophia.

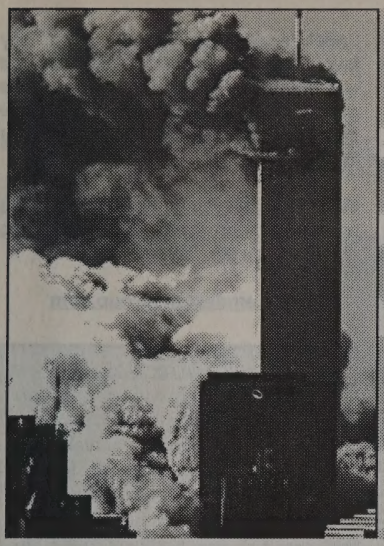
I get so mad when I see drag queens out in public embarrassing me as a proud Black Gay Man, how do I deal with it and why do they do that stuff [dress in drag] in the public?

Boyfriend listen, save yourself. It is a person's birthright in this country to explore the right and pursuit of happiness. Those drag queens are the ones that paved the way for so many other brothers. The DL brothers couldn't be who they were if it wasn't for the Stonewall Era, check yourself before a drag queen wrecks yourself. Let brothers be themselves, dressing in drag works for some while being thugged out works for others. At the end of the day -- ***IT'S ALL DRAG***.

I see brothers at grocery stores, banks, the library, and on campus. Why can't brothers speak outside of the clubs, bookstores, or sex parties?

The one thing you have to remember is, we are not comfortable in every setting and everyone doesn't know who or what our sexuality is. Try nodding your head at him first, just as a token of acknowledgment and go from there. Some brothers are just waiting for you to speak, so go and holla at him.

Got a question for Miss Sequoia, email it to us at: *mojaevans@hotmail.com*



SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

SEQUOIA MAGAZINE
WILL NEVER FORGET.
We mourn the lost of thousands
of people who lost their life on that day.
American will never be the same,
for brothers died on that day as well.
- - Montee Jamal Evans

Beloved brothers, rest in peace...

Wind Beneath My Wings

It must have been cold there in my shadow
To never have sunlight on your face
You were content to let me shine, that's your way
You always walked a step behind
So I was the one with all the glory
While you were the one with all the strength.
A beautiful face without a name, for so long
A beautiful smile to hide the pain

Did you ever know that you're my hero
And everything I would like to be
If I can fly higher than an eagle
You are the wind beneath my wings

It might have appeared to go unnoticed
But I've got it all here in my heart
I want you to know I know the truth
Of course I know it
I would be nothing with out you

Did you ever know that you're my hero
And everything I would like to be
If I can fly higher than an eagle
You are the wind beneath my wings

Fly, fly, fly away
You let me fly so high
Oh, fly, fly
So high against the sky
So high I almost touch the sky
Thank you, thank you, thank god for you
The wind beneath my wings

on one of the deacons. I had a girlfriend at the time.

Well, one weekend I went to stay over his house with my girlfriend. Since he was very religious, he made her sleep upstairs with his daughter and had me stay in the bedroom with him to watch me. For all intense purposes, I attacked him. Him and I was lying in bed and I kept touching him on the sly until finally I touched him and he didn't move my hand. I went from there.

We eventually got into a relationship, it lasted four years. He supported me all through college and he remained married while we were together. We remain friends today.

SM: Why did it end? Well, for me, it was all a web of deceit. While he had a wife, I had a girlfriend. I started feeling guilty and I had to come to terms with who I was and where I was going in life.

SM: So, what happened? We had to call it quits, our lives were headed in different directions. Now, my first boyfriend was Michael. I loved him so much. He took me to my first Adult bookstore and I saw my first Adult video with him. The challenge was, he had a girlfriend and so did I. They [girlfriends] never knew that our closeness was well beyond "*boys hanging out*", we were lovers.

SM: How long did that last? Well, I had come to terms that I wanted to come to Atlanta pre-Olympics to take advantage of the graphic design opportunities that existed. Michael did not want to leave Philadelphia -- so I did.

SM: How was the move? Absolutely traumatizing, I had moved here at the age of 22 to work for this minority graphic design group. The first day of work, I was told that I was not needed.

Now you must understand, the only reason I moved and spent all of my money was to work for this company that sold me this dream that they would hire me once I got here.

SM: So, what did you do? Actually, the sisters [lesbians] rescued me, they were my saving grace. I love to spin records and play CDs, so they paid me to play at their parties and other events.

SM: How did you make it, living in this big city by yourself? Some people would believe that I did have a job. I got up every morning, put on a suit and beat the streets looking for one.

SM: What made you start EM Designs Group? I knew I was going to have my own company. I am so passionate about graphic design and giving people an image just from a conversation of them telling me what they want it to look like. It's exciting to see someone's face after I return with an image they "told" me about.

SM: What do you care about the most? My friendships, since I am an only child, all I had was me. So, my friends make my family. What they think; what they say; and how they feel is so important for me.

SM: What organizations in our community have you worked with? That's a big question. I have done graphic design work for Second Sunday of Atlanta, In The Life Atlanta, Brothers Back-to-Back, National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum, Venus Magazine, SpeakFire, ZAMI, Fatomi, Damron, and so many other organizations.

SM: What is your favorite quote? Make it happen!

SM: What fuels you daily? My strength and staying power is the relationship I have with my mother. She is my best friend. She is involved in every part of my life. Knowing everything that she has been through, fuels me to make it and realize that failing is not an option.

SM: OK, when the history books are written on this era in our community, what would you want said about you and EM Designs Group? That we spoke life to our people. I want it to say that we always presented truth and empowerment for same gender loving people of African descent to act now. I also want the history books to show that I gave back and did my share.

SM: On the last page of the magazine, I write a piece titled, "*This Is Where We Are,*" in your eyes, where are we as a community? Our brothers are lost, we are separated, angry, and hurting. We must return to our first love. If we can't love ourselves, we can't love each other. We have to love the God within first.

SM: Any last words. I am thinking of Patti LaBelle's song, "*You Are My Friend.*" My favorite part starts with, "*I see the world with brand new eyes, your love has made me realize, my future looks so bright to me because of people like you...*" Thank you for this interview.

SM: No, thank you for being a part of the brotherhood and giving us the best of who and what you are. You're welcome.

www.emdesignsgroup.com

SM: Where do you see NAESM in five years? Well, we'd like to be in our own building, offering an array of services. We want to open a clinic eventually and diversify our funding streams. It is my hope that HIV will go away, when it does. I want to have funding sources that will sustain the organization once the epidemic has subsided.

SM: Where would you say we are as a community of same gender loving brothers of African descent? We're not there yet. We don't have the degree of unity, togetherness, and brotherly love that will sustain us. It is my hope that our national program, African American Men United Against AIDS will start the work of bringing brothers from all over the country together to not only fight HIV in their community, but build bridges of hope for our young brothers that are just coming along. I hope to see brothers dropping their individual agendas and come together more.

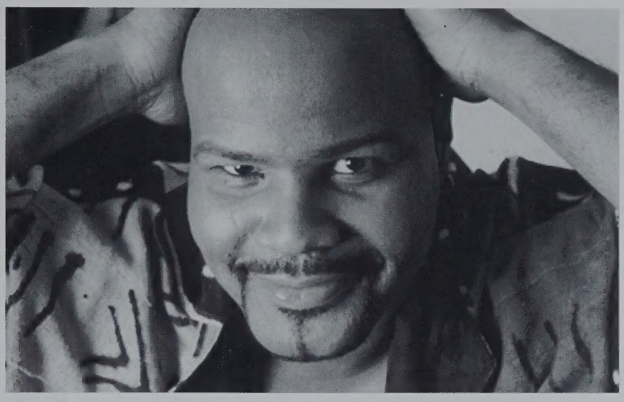
SM: Any last words? Yes, when we started AESM, I worked for two years without getting paid at all. Our first grant was $2,000 from Funds for Southern Communities. We have done a lot to get to where we are right now. We have had to do a lot of sacrificing. And even though our current budget is $1.9 million, that is nothing compared to all the work still needing to be done. We all have to do our part and I can only hope that ***Sequoia Magazine*** serves as another vehicle to bring our community of brothers together.

SM: Well, thanks for that, we'll do the best we can with what we have and thank you for this interview. You're welcome.

www.naesmonline.org

SM

This Is Where We Are



As I think about all the places life has taken me, from dropping out of high school; getting my GED; acquiring my college degree; leaving St. Louis; and beginning again with this magazine. I can only believe that living my life exactly as I have has helped me serve in the many roles I have been given an opportunity to be a part of.

I have sat on organization's board of directors, cleaned fast food restaurant parking lots, taught Wellness Classes in St. Louis' Housing Projects, and I still feel there is so much more to do. As I interviewed Archbishop Bean as well as Brother's Cook and Carn, I wondered where they thought we were as a brotherhood. All responses seemed to be reaching for us to do more.

So, I hope you brothers will commit to doing more; being more; giving more; and sharing of yourselves more. ***Sequoia Magazine*** was started with the intentions of giving brothers back to themselves. I believe we have the capacity to tun things around in our community.

On Newsweek's January 28, 2002 Cover, in big and bold print, they have "**The New Black Power!**" The article speaks of Richard Parsons, Kenneth Chenault, and Stanley O'Neal; all brothers and soon to be or currently serving as Chief Executive Officers of Fortune 500 companies. I thought about my dreams and aspirations: **to build a media empire for same gender loving men of African descent**. I also begin to think about my love, passion, and commitment to this brotherhood and knew that it was well within my reach.

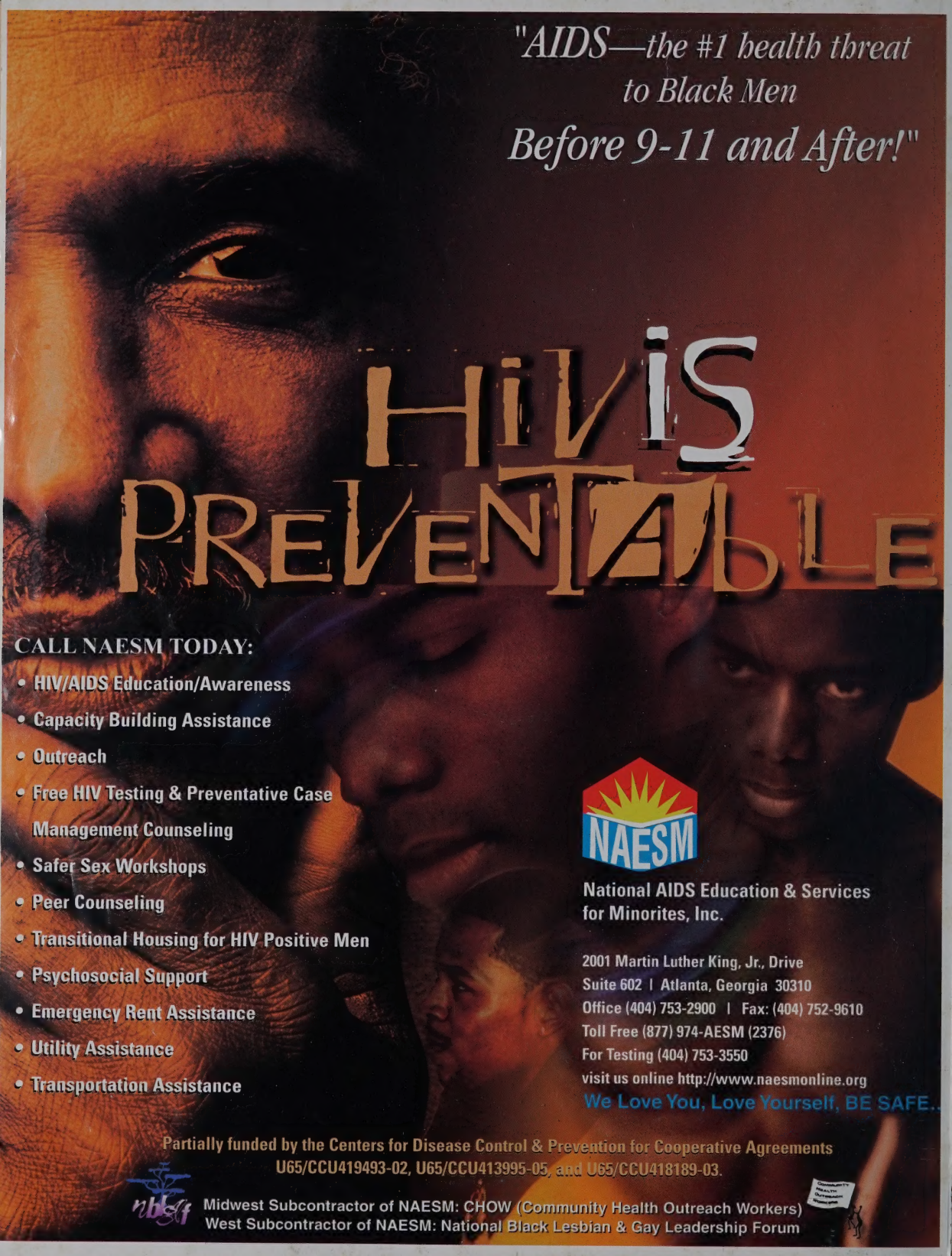
So, I know that where we are right now is finding our place. We are spending countless hours trying to ask for a space at the table of Black Men; getting a seat at the table in the overall community; and navigating spaces that don't affirm us culturally.

Well, it is time beloved brothers for us to rise up. We have to get to the table knowing that our places have already been set. There is no better time than now; no better place than where you are right now; and no other brother to do it than you.

You have an entire brotherhood of same gender loving men of African descent in pockets of this country willing to put their lives on the line for you. I'm not saying you have to be out, I'm saying you have to **Get Up! Get Out! and Do Something!!!**

Much love for you and to you beloveds.

See you next month...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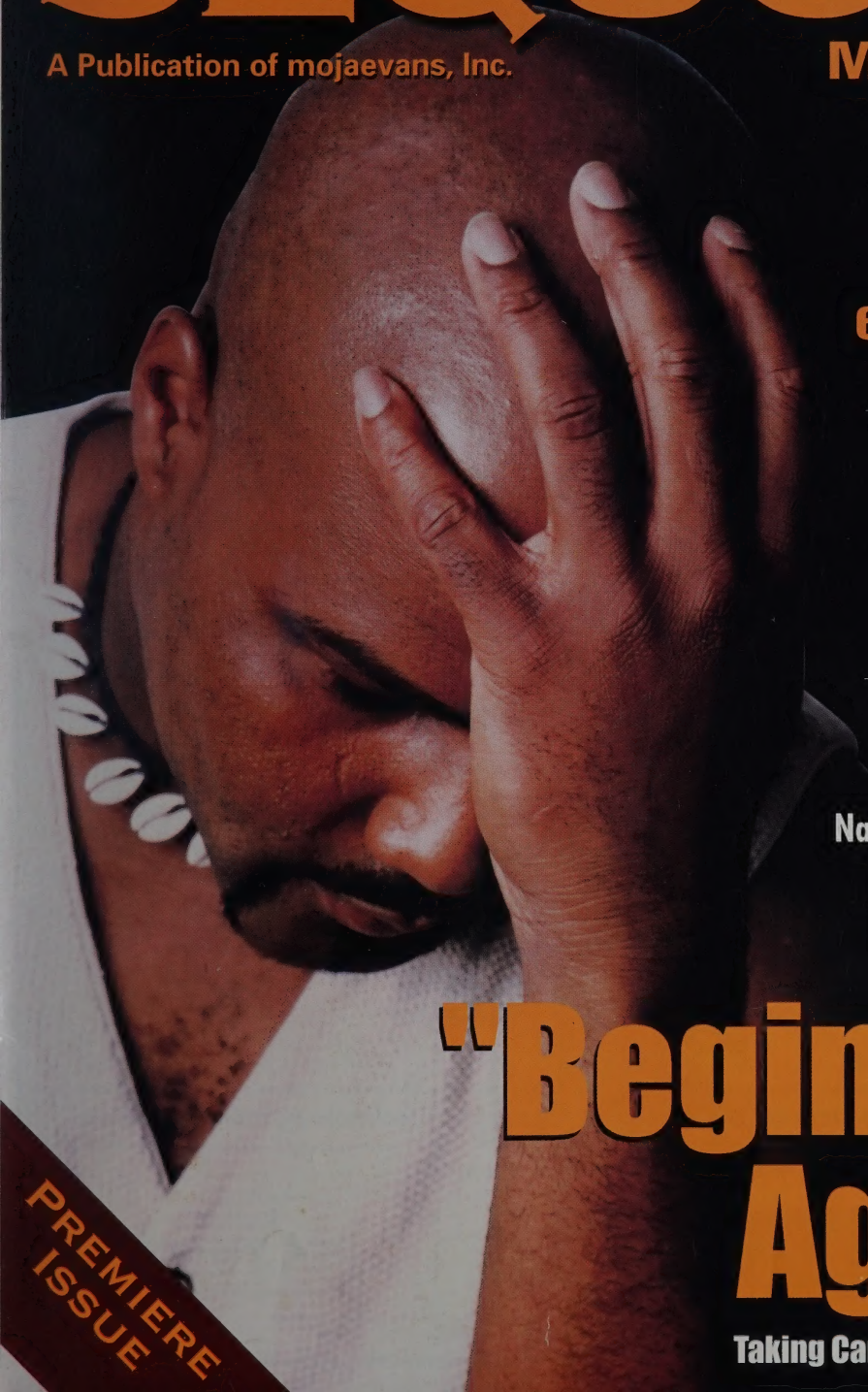
CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY, ONE BROTHER AT A TIME!

SEQUOIA MAGAZINE

A Publication of mojaevans, Inc.

FEBRUARY 2002



Who Is e.Maurice Cook

Brother of the Month

UFC

Unity Fellowship Church Movement

Hot Spot of the Month

NAESM

National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities

Organization of the Month

"Beginning Again"

Taking Care of the Brotherhood

PREMIERE ISSUE

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Sequoia Magazine
Volume I, Issue I

THE MISSION:

To improve the quality of lives of same gender loving men of African descent through the printed media.

THE VISION:

To become a media resource sensitive to same gender loving men of African descent's common experiences; and to print and distribute a quality magazine where same gender loving men of African descent have a presence.

THE SLOGAN:

Connecting our community, one brother at a time!

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Email: **mojaevans@hotmail.com**

eGroup: **sequoiamag@yahoogroups.com**

Telephone/Fax: **404-972-0300**

Mail: **Post Office Box 2624**
Decatur, Georgia 30031-2624

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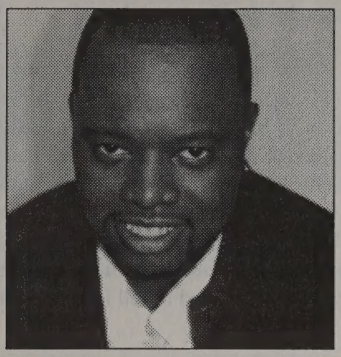
COVER

Photo: *Connie Cross Photography*
Design & Layout: *EM Designs Group*
Atlanta, Georgia

Inside this Issue



*The **Sequoia Magazine** interview: Montee speaks to e.Maurice Cook*

Premiere Issue's Topic:

Beginning Again

by **Jhahbriel C. E. Moore, Sr.**

CENTER PAGE

News in Motion - 6

The section dedicated to telling you about news happening in cities where we are distributed.

BROTHER OF THE MONTH
e.Maurice Cook

ORGANIZATION OF THE MONTH
National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities

HOT SPOT OF THE MONTH

Unity Fellowship Church Movement

Information Corner - 9

The section providing you information around issues and needs in our community.

Discussion Group Information
Health Information
Celebrating Our Pride

Arts & Entertainment - 14

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DJ's Top Ten List
Horror Scope
Hot Web Sites
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Recipe of the Month

Keeping It Real -19

The section dedicated to keeping it real about issues happening around our country.

Dear Sequoia
10 Steps To Loving Yourself
Yahoo!Groups to Join
This Is Where We Are

Want to keep up every month,
log on to **www.mojaevans.com** and SUBSCRIBE TODAY!!!

From the Publisher's Desk

Welcome to our Premiere Issue!

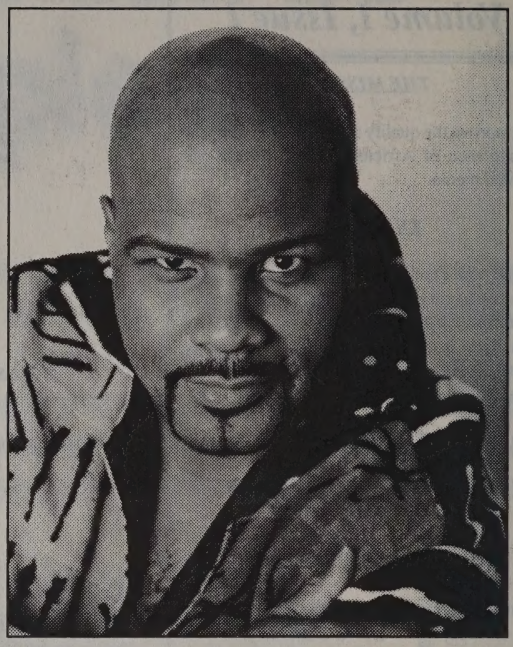
Sequoia Magazine has been a dream of mine since 1994 when I published *Black Gay News* in St. Louis, Missouri and it eventually evolving into *The DownSide Up Newsletter*. I am honored to have the opportunity to share with brothers all over the country what it means to be same gender loving men of African descent. It's about ***Empowerment! & Encouragement!*** These are the elements brothers need to fall in love with themselves.

For me, it's about brothers looking out for brothers. For too long, same gender loving brothers have worked behind the scenes to lift up people of African descent. **It's time to bring those brothers to the forefront.** I am convinced that once the community remembers that we are **THEIR** sons, brothers, fathers, uncles, grandchildren, and etc., they will begin to embrace us again.

Same gender loving brothers of African descent lives are too valuable to allow us to go unnoticed and not be spoken of. Now I know a lot of brothers are not out, and that's okay. We have to be supportive of those who are in environments that are hostile and don't make it safe for them to express themselves fully.

It is the brothers: Archbishop Carl Bean, e.Maurice Cook, and Rudolph H. Carn of the world that we honor this month and appreciate for giving us back to ourselves.

Our lives are priceless and brothers are too worthy to not give them the best of what we have and who we are. The name of our magazine comes from the redwood tree family. This is a tree that requires the roots of other tress for its survival and very existence, so it can't be planted by itself. I liken this same story to same gender loving brothers of African descent: ***our survival depends on our roots connecting***.



We have to embrace one another.

I want you to focus on the last page, "***This Is Where We Are!***" This page is dedicated to helping brothers understand, that although the work is being done, there is so much more work to do. And **WHO** better to do it than you**? WHEN** better to do it than now**?** and **WHERE** better to do it than here in America**?**

As I was working tirelessly on this issue, a good friend of mine, Donato gave me this quote when I felt like I was failing since I missed the February 2, 2002 release deadline: "*You have done so much for so long with so little, you are now capable of doing anything with nothing!*" Thanks little brother for those inspiring words that shall live with me forever.

To the brotherhood, take care of yourself and your blessings...

Your Beloved Brother,

Montee Jamal Evans

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5622 Delmar Boulevard
Suite 101-103 West
St. Louis, Missouri 63112
Tel: 314-367-4488
Fax: 314-367-1088
Mon - Fri: 3:00PM - 9:00PM
Sat: 1:00PM - 5:00PM

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East St. Louis, Illinois 62203
Tel: 618-398-4590
Fax: 618-398-4587
Mon - Fri: 8:00AM - 5:00PM

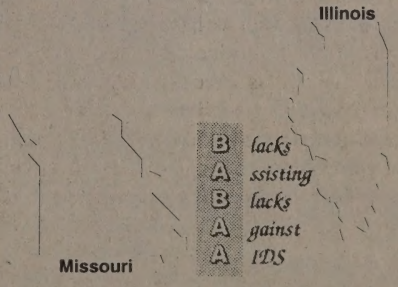
MISSION STATEMENT

To advocate, educate, and act as a resource for the St. Louis Metropolitan African American community, with particular regard to support services and resource development for individuals who are HIV challenged.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- HIV/AIDS/STD Prevention Education and Outreach
- Case Management
- Confidential HIV and Syphilis Counseling and Testing
- Support Groups
- Capacity Building Assistance
- Quarterly Community Newsletter
- Volunteer Action Network (VAN)
- Supportive and Ancillary Referral
- Young Adult Programs & Services
- Professional Consulting Services

B A B A A



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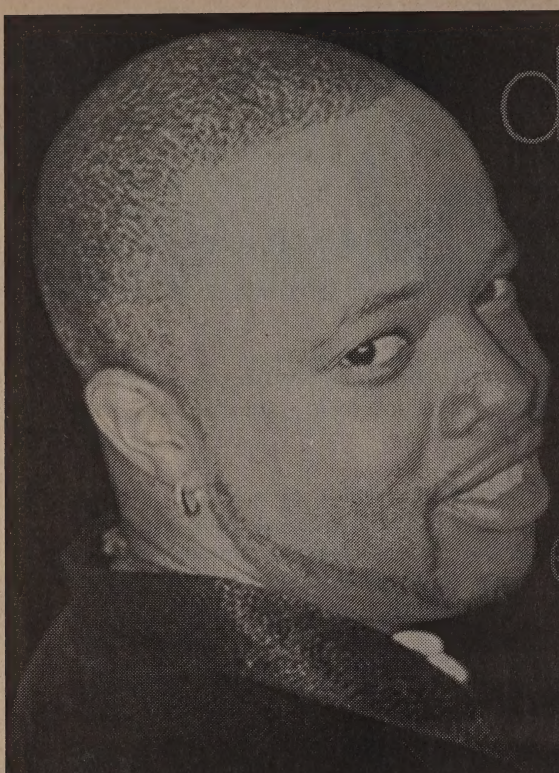

deacon gay
ministry
activist
designer
comedian
entrepreneur
artist d.j.

who IS e.Maurice Cook

Brother of the Month

e.Maurice Cook
Hometown: Philadelphia, PA

Sequoia Magazine *salutes Brother Cook for the contributions he has made to the growth and development of same gender loving people of African descent. This interview is a testimony to the work he has done.*

SM: Who is e.Maurice Cook?

I am a brother that cares for his community. I love to work with start up companies or organizations, because I can grow with them and build their imagery for them.

SM: Where did it all begin? My mother saw it in me when I was 10 years old. She sent me to an Art Camp in Philadelphia. I took painting classes there.

SM: Tell us about Philadelphia? Well, some parts are kind of painful. When I was eight years old, my 13 year old uncle had sex with me. I liked it. He was into art as well, and he used my love for art to exploit me to have sex with him. This went on until I was a teenager and able to fight back.

SM: So, was this your turning point to being a same gender loving brother? No, I knew around the age of six. I loved looking at my uncle naked. I liked to wrestle with guys and just enjoyed touching other boys. The funny thing for me was, when I wrestled a guy down, I would hold him down a little longer, just to be their company.

SM: So, when was your first "*real*" experience with another guy? I believe that every experience was real, my interpretation of it made the difference. I was involved in church and I had this crush

continued on page 22

National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities, Inc.

Atlanta, Georgia

The mission of NAESM is to educate communities of color (primarily African Americans) on the facts about HIV/AIDS through education and prevention efforts and to make health care and socioeconomic services available to people of color with early or advanced stages of HIV/AIDS regardless of their sexual orientation.

Interview w/ Rudolph H. Carn
Executive Director/CEO

SM: Why did you start NAESM? It was actually Mae Reed, Edna M. Brown, and myself. We were sitting in the living room and we knew Atlanta needed an organization that served same gender loving men of African descent.

SM: How long have you been around? We started as AESM in 1990 and once we added our national program in 1999, we added National to our name. This was to reflect the work we were charged to do in 32 states and DC.

SM: What type of services do you provide? We provide a continuum of HIV/AIDS prevention and care services. We have a department specifically centered on HIV heath education and prevention. We also have a department for those that have been impacted by HIV. At our headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, we have a food and clothing pantry.

SM: Wow, it sounds like you have a lot to deal with? It all comes with the territory of growing and understanding the needs of the community we serve.

SM: Don't you have a transition house? Oh yes, we have a 12 bed facility for African American men that are HIV positive who would otherwise be homeless.

SM: So, is prevention working? I really can't tell you right now. I truly feel that the work we do is helping to reduce the rate of HIV infection, but science has to tell us how effective we have truly been.

SM: How long will that take? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it takes approximately 10 years to prove if behavioral interventions being utilized today are working.

SM: Do we have that long to wait? No, we don't. The numbers [HIV] are way to high and steadily rising. We have challenged the CDC to find real time science based tests that will tell is if what we are doing is working.

SM: What about the recent surge of sex parties? Does that make your work difficult? Actually, I can remember sex parties back in the 70's while living in LA. There were sex parties back then, they weren't as talked about though. However, the advent of the Internet and communication systems allow easy and fast exchange of information. This has allowed more connectivity to happen in a community that is underground.

SM: What is NAESM's role regarding prevention at sex parties and on-line? Two very big questions. First, we have done outreach at sex parties held here in Atlanta. One must understand that sex parties are revenue generators for those that put them on. It's all about the money. We try and build inroads into those types of environments, but when alcohol and drugs are being consumed, it makes talking about using a condom and lube challenging.

Second, the Internet. Some guys are meeting and hooking up on-line, our organization is currently rethinking its prevention efforts in this realm. We are exploring ways to outreach via on-line. My thoughts are to go into chatrooms and create websites for brothers on-line giving them tips on how to protect themselves when meeting other brothers. I realize education is the key, we have to articulate that in a way that compliments those brothers logging on to the web.

SM: Let's talk about the rumors you have to deal with. What do you feel folk's biggest perception is of you? I know people think I am mean, evil-spirited, and all that. I'm just me. I am upfront and brutally honest. I don't have time to play games, brothers are dying. My biggest challenge is not being very political in my approach. I'm just cut from a different branch than most.

SM: So, how do you change that? I don't. If an individual has a problem or concern with me, I encourage them to pick up the phone, drop me an email, or come and see me. I will provide clarity. I can't spend my life running around trying to find out who has a problem or concern with me and who doesn't. That takes away from the work needing to be done. I have been misrepresented by past employees and folks that envy where our agency is or me as an individual. I am open to having honest dialogues with people about their concerns, as long as we can be respectful of one another.

SM: So, what keeps you going everyday? I feel good when clients call and tell us that without NAESM they would be homeless, or hungry, or doing drugs. I don't let the negativity overshadow the positives that our agency is doing.

continued on page 22

we must begin to trust that our validating others in their journey will in turn liberate us as individuals. This is the way we should leave the world. Lastly, it is so essential that each person develop and have a healthy sense of self-esteem.

SM: Thank you for this interview. You are so welcome, be blessed.

In a relationship, one has to know when to be the husband and when to be the wife.
--Archbishop Carl Bean

Hot Spot of the Month

Archbishop Carl Bean
Birthdate: May 26, 1944
Hometown: Baltimore, Maryland

SM: Where did life begin for you? Well, I have never been closeted. While growing up in Baltimore, I asked my mother for a baton at six years old. At 13, I was the drill major for the Elks.

SM: Who were your role models/mentors? Dr. Howard Thurman, he was the first black to explore progressive theology. He was Dr. King's teacher at Morehouse College and started a church for people of all races in San Francisco. He wanted to teach Jesus to the disinherited. Also, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., he brought the best of who he was forward and gave his life for being himself.

SM: What should same gender loving people of African descent be thinking about? Well, we should make sure that our people are given freedom from oppressive Christianity. I want people to look at the Bible in many ways and really understand the history of the writers and the time it was written.

I also want brothers, sisters, and transgenders to stand firm against anything that separates our people. We were forced to separate anything that would stop the process of individual liberation. We must now challenge and return to those things that we were led to believe was wrong.

SM: How did your life evolve? Well, I was a gay man that worked with gospel music and choirs. I was closeted back then. I would write songs, despite my personal pain because I loved the Black Church.

SM: Do you have a special person in your life? I am married to the Church, it provides me everything I need.

SM: Tell us about your song, "Born This Way." Well, Barry Gordy from Motown called me and told me that they needed a disco song. They knew I did gospel, yet they wanted a song that spoke to our experiences as same gender loving people of African descent. So, in 1977 I recorded the song and it was released in 1978.

SM: Any last words. Yes, let us learn to accept each other wherever we are at this point in our life's journey. We must realize that our greatest pain has come from our childhood experiences. In order to find healing,

Archbishop Carl Bean, FOUNDER

God is Love,
and Love Is For Everyone

CHURCH MOTTO

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www.unityfellowshipchurch.org

Information Corner

Discussion Groups for Brothers

Afro Chat
San Francisco, California
415-487-8018

Black Gay Male Discussion Group
Miami, Florida
305-672-0865

Brothas Speak
Tampa, Florida
813-236-8809

Brother to Brother
Brooklyn, New York
718-230-0770

Brother's United Network of Tennessee
Nashville, Tennessee
615-259-4866, ext. 169

COLOURS, Inc.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
215-496-0330

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Chicago, Illinois
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Gay Men of African Descent
New York, New York
212-828-1697

Let's Rap Brother
Inglewood, California
310-674-4444

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Phoenix, Arizona
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Los Angeles, California
323-938-8322

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Washington, DC
202-546-8200

Young Brothers Exchange
Los Angeles, California
310-419-1961

Youth Discussion Group
Chicago, Illinois
312-986-0661

WALKING BLOOPERS

When it comes to fitness walking, do what comes naturally. Many brothers lapse into less-than-perfect tendencies that keep them from achieving greater fitness or enjoying walking to its fullest. Are you making these slips?

1. You stretch first. Do it after walking for five to ten minutes, or at the end of your walk. You'll find warmed-up muscles stretch more easily and safely. Stretching pays off in speed, grace, and less risk of soreness and injury.

2. You wear the wrong shoes. They can create shin and heel pain, knee strain, blisters and other problems. Investing in quality, properly fitted walking shoes is critical for fitness walking.

3. You don't walk far or fast enough. If you're walking for fitness and weight loss, you need to increase distance or speed, or both, when you're ready for it. The key is keeping your heart rate moderately elevated.

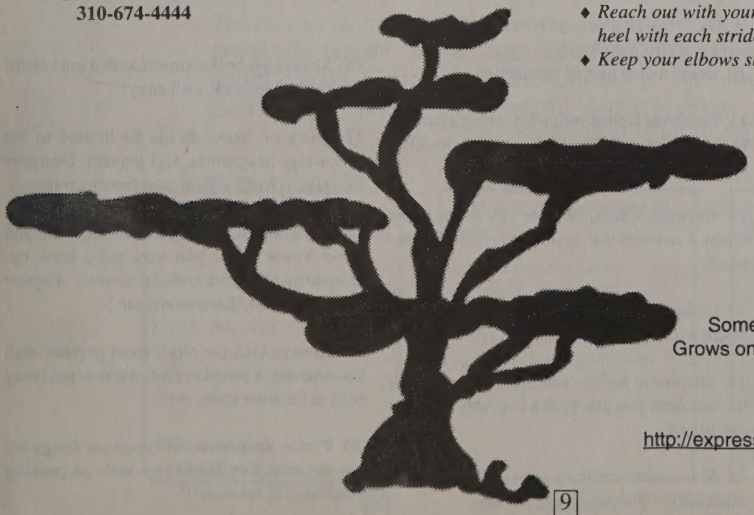
4. You take giant steps. Big strides can stress your calf muscles and hyper-extend your knees. Let your leg motion be smooth and natural, with the heel striking first; push off with your toes at the end of each step.

Watch your posture...

- *Walk tall, looking forward*
- *Keep your head up and shoulders back*
- *Take quick, comfortable steps*
- *Reach out with your hip, knee and heel with each stride*
- *Keep your elbows slightly bent*

Don't...

- *Slouch*
- *Sashay your hips*
- *Arch your lower back*
- *Swing your arms like a windmill*
- *Flap your elbows like chicken wings*



SEQUOIA TREE FACTS

Height: 250 - 300 feet
(*taller than the Statue of Liberty*)
Weight: 4,000 tons
Age: 1,500 to 3,000 years
Volume: 30,000 to 50,000 cubic feet

Sometimes called the *big tree* or *Sierra redwood*
Grows only in Sierra Nevada mountains of California

For more info, log on to:

http://express.howstuffworks.com/noway-trees.htm

Celebrating Our Pride

There are 30+ same gender loving people of African descent pride festivities happening around the country a year. Here, you will find information on those happening in 2002 (*that we know about*).

Sequoia Magazine will keep you informed of Black Pride Festivities and we'll even cover some of these events as well.

Feel free to email us at ***mojaevans@hotmail.com*** with your Black Pride schedule of events.

Pride 2002

April

Houston Splash
Philadelphia Black Gay Pride

May

DC Black Gay Pride

June

Oakland Black Pride
San Francisco SOUL of Pride
Tampa Jamz
North Carolina Black Pride

July

Chicago Black Pride
Windy City Black LGBT Pride
At The Beach (LA Pride)
Detroit Hotter Than July Black Pride

August

NYC Black Gay Pride
St. Louis Black Gay Pride
Cleveland Black Gay Pride
Kansas City Black Gay Pride
Minneapolis/St. Paul Black LGBT Pride

September

Atlanta: Labor Day Weekend
Dallas Black Gay Pride

Black Pride Travel Do's & Don'ts

Brought to you by: www.houstonsplash.com/top20.htm

1. Always view the weather conditions of your destination city and pack accordingly.

2. When packing, remember whatever you pack you may have to carry a distance further than your bedroom to the car parked outside.

3. Get on the Internet and map out directions to your various hot spots before your trip, in order to prevent you from getting lost in unfamiliar cities.

4. Pack at least two outfits showcasing your best assets... (*Whether it be those pecs, your bust line, arms, legs, etc.*)

5. Never pack more than two outfits per day.

6. One should never leave home without a sexy swimsuit.

7. At least one ***Bourgeois***, ***GRAND*** or ***CHURCH*** outfit for those ghetto fabulous /Fu Fu Events!!

8. Pedicure, Manicure, Lip Gloss or Chapstick, Need I say more?

9. Always pack plenty of condoms & lube.

10. Bring a nice pair of sunglasses.

11. For those Kodak moments, bring a camera to take pictures of all those fine looking brothers.

12. Business Cards, because you never know when a networking opportunity will present itself.

13. Invite a good Judy (*i.e. friend*) or buddy to laugh with the entire trip.

14. Electronic Rolodex in order to type in all the numbers you get, be it a two-way pager or cell phone.

15. Always arrive at the airport two hours early, especially if you are flying standby.

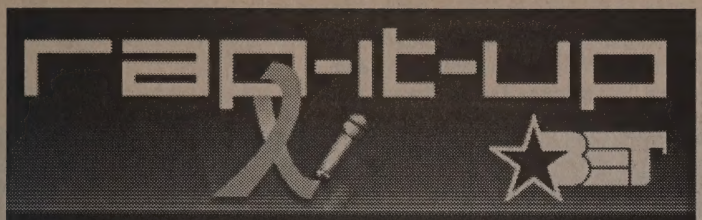
16. Always grace the airport with a cute outfit to turn the kids sick with envy!!!

17. Carry on items should be limited to the following: Magazines, CD players, Designer Luggage (***ONLY***), gum, and breathe mints.

18. Always flash that killer smile because you never know where you may get a hook up. (*Department Stores, Restaurants, Airport Ticket Counter, Bartenders, etc.*)

19. Always visit the city's most popular mall because one is bound to find an article not being sold in his own state.

20. Please understand all vacation flings are not the next **Mr. Right**, so don't go packing your bags to relocate!!!



RIGHT NOW,
education is one of our best weapons against **AIDS**. There is no cure for **AIDS**. The only way to stop the spread of **HIV** is to **RAP-IT-UP** and know the **FACTS**.
www.rap-it-up.com

STATISTICS

HIV is the leading cause of death for African Americans **ages 25 – 44**.

Although African-Americans only represent an estimated 12% of the U.S. population, they make up **almost half (47%) of new AIDS cases.**

The rate of reported AIDS cases among African-Americans is **more than 9 times** the case rate among whites and more than twice the rate among Latinos.

1 in 50 African American men have HIV+.

Young African Americans make up 60% of new AIDS cases among teens ages 13-19.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

It's as simple as

www.mojaevans.com

LOG ON - CONNECT - SUBSCRIBE

Health-Timer

The following are screening tests brothers generally have as part of regular physicals, based on their age. Brothers at high risk for some diseases might consider more frequent monitoring. Ask your physician what is best for you. We want you healthy and fit in 2002.

BROTHERS IN THEIR 20'S

Testicle self-examination
(*every two to three months*)

Blood pressure measurement
(*every two years*)

Cholesterol screening
(*every five years*)

HIV testing
(*if sexually active*)

BROTHERS IN THEIR 30's & 40'S

Add everything to the left, plus:

Digital rectal exam
(*annually, if over 40*)

Watch for diabetes; blood test of symptoms present

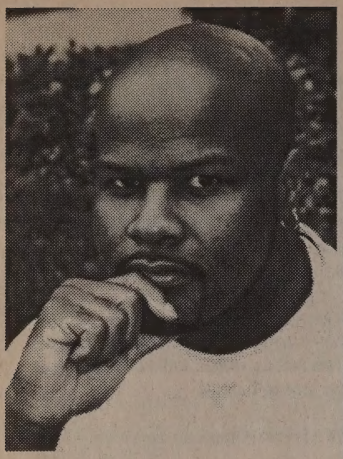
BROTHERS IN THEIR 50's & OLDER

Add everything to the left, plus:

Fecal occult blood test
(*annually*)

Sigmoidoscopy
(*every 3 to 5 years, at the discretion of a physician*)

PSA Test
(*annually*)



"Brothers, please understand that falling down is only a failure if you don't get up and begin again." -- **Montee Jamal Evans**

"Beginning Again"

At the beginning of every year, many brothers make resolutions to change, to do things differently, better, somehow to improve their lives.

Each year we begin again and again, starting over making the same mistakes we did the previous year. This is a good time to reflect on where we have been, where we want to go, and some of the things that are preventing us from getting there.

In thinking about this topic, I discovered some interesting things. Achieving anything in life is very difficult under the best of circumstances. When you are African American, or any other minority for that matter, it is even more difficult. And if you are a same gender loving (SGL) brother of African descent, there can be another level of difficulty on top of that.

You would think that these facts would be very discouraging for people trying to better themselves, but I will share some examples with you of people who would not let anything stand in their way to achieving their goals and ambitions, despite the incredible odds.

It really is quite phenomenal what SGL Brothers are capable of doing. From the early 1600's when we first arrived in America, we have struggled and fought for everything we have acquired up to this point in history.

Through slavery; through the civil rights movement; and through the everyday battles we fight today; SGL Brothers have demonstrated time and time again that they can overcome adversity and rise to the top. Yes, it is 2002 and we are still fighting to get ahead. And despite this, we continue to make our mark just like our brothers who paved the way.

The same hammer that shatters the glass forges the steel.
-- Marcus Garvey

As a first example, let us consider Benjamin Banneker (1731-1806), who received what amounted to an eighth grade education. Banneker was 59 years old when he studied astronomy, mathematics and science. He was self-taught, borrowing books from George Ellicott, to learn astronomy. It is a well known fact that he was a SGL Brother, and despite all Benjamin went through, he published the first almanac and sent it to the Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, along with a letter protesting the prevailing government belief that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites.

Abolitionist used the almanacs as evidence that blacks were capable of superior intellect. Benjamin Banneker proved that it is never too late to learn and he used his knowledge to help his people move ahead.

We don't even have to go as far back as Banneker. Today, we have several openly SGL Brothers that are examples of the struggles and successes we deal with in the new millennium.

One particular struggle is being black and SGL in corporate America. According to *Forward Communications*, a national consulting firm, research has proven that there is not one openly SGL Brother serving as a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a Fortune 500 company. Perhaps they

do exist, but they are not out because of the fear of jeopardizing their career.

There are, however, many openly SGL SGL Brothers that serve as senior managers and executives below the level of the CEO, and their stories offer much hope that one day soon we will see a CEO who is SGL.

"The Black homosexual is hard pressed to gain audience among his heterosexual brothers; even if he is more talented, he is inhibited by his silence or his admissions. This is what the race has depended on in being able to erase homosexuality from our recorded history.

The "chosen" history. But these sacred constructions of silence are futile exercises in denial. We will not go away with our issues of sexuality. We are coming home."

-- Essex Hemphill

As an example, Ronald L. Moore decided to come out professionally when he moved to Atlanta, Georgia, to become the General Manager of Hewlett Packard. He is one of the highest-ranking, open and out SGL Brothers at a Fortune 500 company. One statement he made that really stands out is; "*The key aspect of success in corporate America is that you have to have a plan. You have to be able to analyze your career forward and backwards, outlining a strategy for what kinds of responsibility you want to undertake and what kind of impact you want to have with your particular company. For black employees, you have to be willing to work with and trust your non-black colleagues to succeed.*" Moore's success at HP has not been hampered in any way by his being SGL.

Rodney Gooden is a Senior Project Manager at R.R. Donnelly, the international publishing conglomerate in Chicago, Illinois. He is part of the new generation of SGL Brothers serving as executives. He states that when R.R. Donnelly recruited him, they rolled out the red carpet for him and his partner. Everyone at the company knows he is SGL, and his career is more successful than many would have expected under the circumstances.

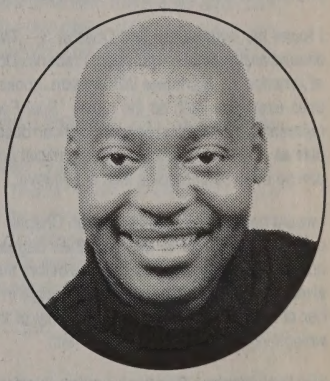
There are examples of successful SGL Brothers of African descent in all kinds of industries and sectors, be it the corporate world, the entertainment world, or the scientific research world.

Sometimes we are our own worst enemy. We don't look out for each other, or help each other get jobs, or help with the community. Can you believe that in 2002 there are brothers who can't read or write, let alone try to gain employment? There are even brothers who can't read the directions on their medication bottles. Is it too much to ask that some of our strong, intelligent SGL Brothers start a literacy program for young SGL Brothers? Where are the brothers volunteering to build structured programs that will help to prepare resumes, prepare for interviews, demonstrate proper attire and etiquette?

It is noted that we are strong brothers and we have overcome many struggles. Some obstacles we are presently dealing with include our sexual nature, trying to gain the respect we deserve, and wanting to be treated like any heterosexual in America.

One of the strangest things is that SGL Brothers still have not come together as a unified community, supporting each other and helping each other move forward. Our grandfathers would describe this behavior as "*crabs in a bucket*", scratching, clawing, and climbing over each other to get out, with no regard for the welfare of others.

We need to be the fingers in a hand to form that mighty fist that will enable us to get ahead in life. This fist will overcome the prejudice that we fight against everyday. We need to show each other another level of "**BROTHERLY**



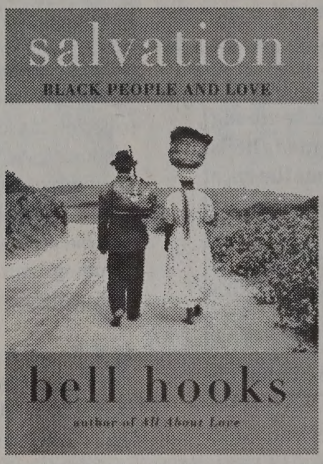
FEBRUARY'S THEME TOPIC WRITER:

Jhahbriel C. E. Moore, Sr.
Atlanta, Georgia
Email: *jhahrule@aol.com*
Birthdate: *May 19, 1972*
B.A. in Business Administration, Washington State University

continued on page 20

NEXT MONTH'S TOPIC:

"BRIDGING THE GAP IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY"

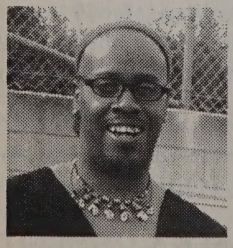


While reading **Salvation: Black People and Love** by bell hooks, I thought to myself, you're preaching to the choir. Then I realized one should always take the opportunity to be reminded about love. hooks breaks her book down in chapters focusing on specific topics. This makes it easy for the reader to pinpoint subject matter that is of particular interest to them.

I found the Introduction and Chapter 3 – ***The Issue of Self-Love*** most fulfilling. Using references as diverse as the slave narratives of Frederick Douglas and Harriet Tubman to the more recent "*The Healing of America*" by **Marianne Williamson**. hooks gives tremendous credence to her views. hooks expertly uses examples such as the movie "*Soul Food*." Specifically, she talks of the "mama" character that represents an icon most people of African descent can recognize as the epitome of love. Yet this character dies as a result of diabetes. Her sacrificial act of giving love to everyone yet neglecting her own health can be seen as perhaps a lack of self-love.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Chapter 10 – ***Embracing Gayness*** **(her word y'all).** Again hooks calls for the reader to examine their baggage concerning this topic. She speaks of a tolerance of homosexuality among black people before the Black Power Movement. All of us understand there have always been Same Gender Loving people in our families and communities. hooks does not stray from her challenge. She notes the hypocrisy of the black church using the talents of SGL people but not welcoming them into the family of faith.

The final chapter of the book ***Loving Justice*** quotes Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, "*Our goal is to create a beloved community, and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.*" hooks completes her book by writing, "*The individuals who are a part of that beloved community are already in our lives. We do not need to search for them. We can start where we are. We begin our journey with love, and love will always bring us back to where we started. Making the choice to love can heal our wounded spirits and our body politic. It is the deepest revolution, the turning away from the world as we know it, toward the world we must make if we are to be one with the planet – one healing heart giving and sustaining life. Love is our hope and our salvation.*" To this I say, **And So It Is!!**



Jair lives in Los Angeles, California.

He works for the Los Feliz Branch of the LA Public Library. He is actively pursuing the completion of the manuscript for his novel "***House Divided***" and the publication of a book of poems titled "***In the Garden***". He is Co-Founder and Co-Coordinator of the Lorde-Baldwin Adult Reading Project an outreach ministry of ***Unity Fellowship Church - Los Angeles***. He can be reached by e-mail at: ***funkydreads@blackplanet.com***

DJ Ron C
Chicago, Illinois

http://communities.msn.com/
THEDJRONCDISCOPAGE

10. - I've Lost Control
Sleezy D
9. - I Can't Turn Around
Isaac Hayes
8. - Blackout (*Any version*)
Lil' Louis
7. - Cold World
(*The Unreleased Version*)
Jamie Principle
6 & 5. - Out of Work, Need a Job
Jesse Gould
4. - Can't Stop
ISH
3. - I Don't Want You Back
Ramona Brooks
2. - Optimo
Liquid Liquid
1. - Bad Luck
Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes

House
Deep House
Gospel House
R & B
Hip Hop

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Sequoia Magazine will be featuring DJs from all over the world and selling their music via our website in a few months.

Stay tuned to our website for more info: **www.mojaevans.com**. Also, check out the websites below for some serious House Music -- **ALL PRAISE TO GOSPEL HOUSE MUSIC**, let's keep it alive!!!

www.gospelhousemusic.com
www.garagehousemusic.com
www.pojirecords.com
www.dcsanctuary.com

... and many more to come

HORROR SCOPE

February 2002 Horror Scope

Sequoia Magazine communed with the stars for astrological purposes, below are the results.

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

Aquarians are the language of love. "This month it ain't happening child! Stop pushing and let your eyes express your true intentions.

Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

This month focus on the simple things in life. "Stop trying to be Vanna Trump and focus on being you"! Save the mink for the right occasion, not for your sista's birthday party where they are serving pizza and beer.

Aries (March 21 - April 19)

*This month will be an adventurous one for you. In other words, "Keep writing those checks and knowing your account has been closed for a year. The adventure will be a long trip to **OZ** with matching silver bracelets.*

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

Different strokes for different folks Taurus. Just because you don't like your best friend's new boyfriend doesn't mean he isn't suppose to like him. Stop worrying, he will find a job and get those teeth fixed.

Gemini (May 21 - June 21)

Gemini, you shiny happy QUEEN! That's right, this month everything is going your way. Let your individuality shine. Stop following those children in dark places. Go by yourself!

Cancer (June 22 - July 22)

*Take time for both. This month you have to stop being that **"Wall Flower"** and get out more. You can still have your private time as well. Those special movies you watch are still going to be there when you get home.*

Leo (July 23 - August 22)

This month you should focus on not being very popular. Next time, don't leave your underwear in well traveled territories. That ain't cute boyfriend!

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

This month show those true leadership skills. Don't let him lead, you make him follow. It's time to stop playing Ms. Bottom and become Mr. Top. Versatility is a wonderful thing in 2002.

Libra (September 23 - October 23)

There will be some hard decisions you will have to make this month. "Child, either deal with his drama or just let that brother go! Stop overanalyzing.

Scorpio (October 24 - November 21)

Can you avoid money this month boyfriend! Child, face it, what is more important? Those $500 alligator pumps, or having somewhere to live? Get into it!

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

Relationship elevator going up! That's right boo, this month you might want to spend less time with the extras and more time with your man. (If you know what I mean) LEAVE THE OTHERS ALONE!!!

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

This month child, please focus on your health. That's right! Those 34's ain't working any more for you. When you started developing that Weenie Doo (When your belly goes further out than your weenie doo) it just ain't cute.

Recipe of the Month

Baked Stuffed Flounder

Ingredients:

1/2 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped green onions with tops
1 glove garlic - minced
8 tablespoons butter
1 cup bread crumbs
4 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 pound boiled shrimp - chopped
1/2 pound lump crabmeat
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 egg - slightly beaten
black pepper or cayenne (or both)
salt to taste
4 flounders, medium size

Sauté celery, onions and garlic in melted butter over low heat. **Add** bread crumbs, crabmeat, shrimp, parsley and egg and mix well. **Season** with salt and pepper. **Split** the thick side of the flounder lengthwise and widthwise, **loosen** the meat from the bone of the fish to form a pocket for stuffing. **Brush** well with melted butter and lemon juice. **Salt, pepper and stuff** the pocket. **Place** in a pan with enough water to cover the bottom of the pan. **Broil** 3" from heat until the fish flakes easily with a fork. **Baste** frequently with the liquid in the pan.

brought to you by...

SoulFoodCookbook
www.SoulFoodCookbook.com

*Would you like to be a guest in Montee's home to taste this month's recipe? Email him at **mojaevans@hotmail.com***

Have you logged on to...

www.mojaevans.com

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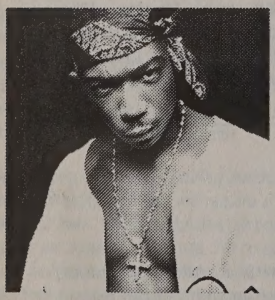
Brothers love...

Aaliyah Dana Haughton
January 16, 1979
Brooklyn, New York
www.aaliyah.com

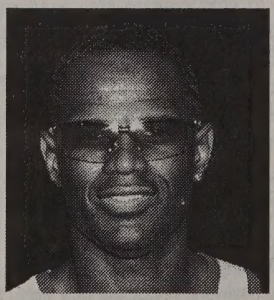
Whitney Elizabeth Houston
August 6, 1963
Newark, New Jersey
www.whitney-fan.com

Kimberly Jones
July 11, 1975
Brooklyn, New York
www.lilkim.com

Patti LaBelle
May 24, 1944
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
www.pattilabelle.com



Jeffrey Atkins
February 29, 1976
Hollis, Queens, New York
www.jarule.net



Brian McKnight
June 5, 1969
Buffalo, New York
www.brian-mcknight.com

Elgin Baylor Lumpkin
October 15, 1975
Washington, DC
www.ginuwine.com

Usher Raymond
October 14, 1978
Chattanooga, Tennessee
www.usherworld.com

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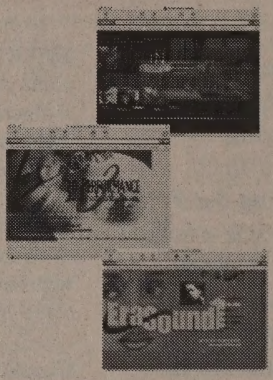

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HOT WEB SITES

Sequoia Magazine searched the Internet to find websites that would help brothers understand how vast a community we really are.

Type in **WWW.** and:

advocate.com
aen.org
africana.com
arealread.org
arisemag.com
atlantablackpride.com
babaa.org
balmingilead.org
biresource.org
blackaids.org
blackamericaonline.com
black-collegian.com
blackradicalcongress.com
blackradio.net
blackstripe.com
blk.com
clubrimshot.com
devry.edu
chocolatecityusa.com
ebonymale.com
emdesignsgroup.com
gay.com
gayhealth.com
gmad.org
hrc.org
inthelifeatl.com
livedlife.com
melanet.com
minorityoutreach.org
moyopress.com
naesmonline.org
nmac.org
nubianknights.com
outlineschicago.com/blacklines
planetout.com
tbwt.com
tpan.com
ubp.com
unityfellowshipchurch.org
venusmagazine.com
washblade.com
youthhiv.org

Do you have a website for us to put on our website? Email us at *mojaevans@hotmail.com*

LOG ON
www.mojaevans.com

FOR MY OWN PROTECTION

By Essex Hemphill

I want to start an organization
to save my life.
If whales, snails, dogs, cats
Chrysler and Nixon can be saved,
the lives of Black men are priceless
and can be saved.

We should be able to save each other.
I don't want to wait for the Heritage Foundation
to release a study saying
Black people are almost extinct.
I don't want to be the living dead
pacified with drugs, sex and rock-n-roll.
If a human chain can be formed
around nuclear missile sites,
then surely Black men can form
human chains around Anacostia, Harlem,
South Africa, Wall Street, Hollywood,
each other.

If we have to take tomorrow with blood
are we ready?
Do our S curls and dreadlocks and phillies
make us any more ready than a bush or
conkaline?
I'm not concerned
about the attire of a soldier.
All I want to know
for my own protection
is are we capable
of whatever
whenever.

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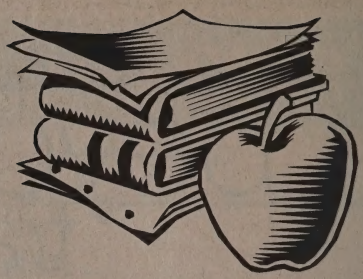

Sequoia's Book/Birthday Club Rules

HAVE YOU EVER thought about starting a book/birthday club? Are you **INTERESTED** in meeting more intellectual brothers? Do you live in an area where it's **HARD FOR BROTHERS TO COME TOGETHER** for social activities?

Montee has come up with some interesting rules for a group of twelve brothers to come together monthly, break bread with one another, and one brother walks away monthly with some change in his pocket.

Check this out, email him at *mojaevans@hotmail.com* and let him know how it works out.

Identify twelve **brothers** that like to read.

Each **brother** selects a book for the group to read.

Each **brother** chooses a month that they will host a meeting at their home, a local coffee shop, or etc., preferably their birthday month.

Each **brother** brings a dish or a small amount of money to eat (*if public place chosen*).

Here's the money part:

Each brother brings ***$25 - $50*** (*group decides*)
to every book/birthday club meeting.

Depending on the schedule agreed upon in the beginning, the brother whose birthday falls in the month the meeting is held will get the pot of money.

Even if a brother does not attend,
they are still responsible for turning in money -- **Good Luck!!!**

10 Steps To Loving Yourself

by Montee Jamal Evans

1. ***Stop all criticism***: Criticism never changes a thing. Refuse to criticize yourself. Accept yourself exactly as you are. When you criticize, your changes are negative. When you approve of yourself, your changes are positive. Don't be so hard on yourself!

2. ***Don't scare yourself***: Stop terrorizing yourself with your thoughts. It's a dreadful way to live. Find a mental image that gives you pleasure, and immediately switch your scary thought to a pleasure thought.

3. ***Be gentle and kind and patient:*** Be gentle with yourself. Be kind to yourself. Be patient with yourself as you learn the new ways of thinking. Treat yourself as you would someone you really loved. The one person you have to be around all the time is the one you see in the mirror.

4. ***Be kind to your mind:*** Self hatred is only hating your own thoughts. Don't hate yourself for having the thoughts. Gently change your thoughts. Your mind is allowed to wander because that is the benefit of having objectivity in thinking.

5. ***Praise yourself:*** Criticism breaks down the inner spirit. Praise builds it up. Praise yourself as much as you can. Tell yourself how well you are doing with every little thing. Don't wait on anyone else to recognize the good in you, after you recognize yourself, who else matters?

6. ***Support yourself:*** Find ways to support yourself. Reach out to friends and allow them to help you. You are being strong when you can ask for help when you need it. When you are faced with a difficult subject, help is just a phone call, email, or visit away. Reach out if you have to.

7. ***Be loving to your negatives:*** Acknowledge that you created them to fulfill them. If you do not like something about yourself that is negative, let it go. The way to get ahead of negative factors in our life is to release them when we identify them.

8. ***Take care of your body:*** Learn about nutrition. What kind of fuel does your body need to have optimum energy and vitality? Learn about exercise. Cherish and revere the temple you live in and treat it right. You are all you have at the end of the day.

9. ***Mirror work:*** Look into your eyes often. Express this growing sense of love you have for yourself. Forgive yourself looking into the mirror. Talk to your family members or friends looking into the mirror. At least once a day, tell yourself in the mirror, "**I LOVE YOU**!"

10. ***Love yourself:*** Begin it now. Do the best you can. All you have to do is recognize the beauty you have inside of yourself and bring it forward. Love must begin at home before it can spread abroad. When was the last time you took yourself on a date?

Yahoo! Groups to Join

Log on to these websites, read the group/club profile and click to join if it works for you.

These are Yahoo! **GROUPS**
First, type in the following line:

http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/

and then put the line below behind the slash

aamuaa
AfricansGayForum
blackmaleagenda
BMSAN
MatureBlackGayMen
MatureBlackMenForLTR
samegenderlovingblackfolks
sequoiamag
ymsmtg

These are Yahoo! **CLUBS**
First, type in the following line:

http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/

and then put the line below behind the slash

africanamericanglbtevents
blackrainbowatlanta
consciousgayblackmen
themensgathering
spiritofblackgaymen
worshipblackmen

Bold denotes that Montee is a member of these groups.

www.mojaevans.com

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Connecting our community, one brother at a time!

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SUPPORT". By this I mean, we lack the desire to help one another even when we have the means to do so.

There is so much we could be and should be doing. Those who made it and accomplished the things or jobs they wanted, too often forget about the ones who are still trying to get there. Instead of offering help, assistance, or advice, our brothers turn their heads as if they forgot where they came from. There is no way we are ever going to make it, if we don't pull together and overcome things like jealousy, animosity, or pride.

Everybody can be great
because everybody can serve.
-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Over the course of history, especially the history of SGL Brothers, many have managed to get ahead in life and it is no secret to how they accomplished their success. Hard work, good friends, and family as well as a burning desire to succeed. We possess all the tools to succeed in whatever endeavour we set out to accomplish. No matter how many times we begin again we should always strive to make our lives better. What we need on top of that is each other.

"The Black homosexual is hard pressed to gain audience among his heterosexual brothers; even if he is more talented, he is inhibited by his silence or his admissions. This is what the race has depended on in being able to erase homosexuality from our recorded history.
The "chosen" history. But these sacred constructions of silence are futile exercises in denial. We will not go away with our issues of sexuality. We are coming home."
-- Essex Hemphill

In conclusion, I hope we can resolve to be better brothers to ourselves and one another. As brothers, we should already be proud of what we have accomplished thus far.

Brothers stand strong against what you know isn't true. We are strong black men making a positive change in 2002.

It is our duty to conserve our physical powers, our intellectual endowments, and our spiritual ideas.
-- W.E.B. DuBois

Dear Sequoia?

I don't feel comfortable using a condom, it doesn't give me the same feeling as hitting it "raw." What should I do?

Baby, let me tell you -- your "***life***" depends on you getting over this. The one thing that has worked well for me and my man is him masturbating with a condom on until he started feeling better about it. He wasn't going to get none, if he didn't work this out. In all sincerity, condoms HAVE to be used during intercourse at all times, it just takes some getting use to.

What should I do when a brother I meet and perceives as the "top" turns out to be a "bottom" in the bedroom? I only like "top" dawgs.

You should have had this conversation before the bedroom door closed. But, since you're right there in the moment and "**your**" perception or **he presented himself** wrong, the best thing I would suggest is try being a "top" dawg for once in your life - OR - kindly let the brother know that you "prefer" him to be Tyrone tonight and you'll be Sophia.

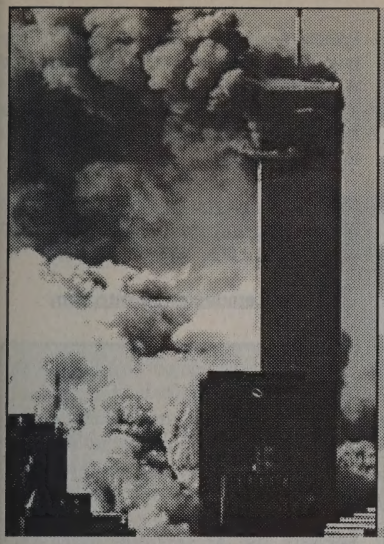
I get so mad when I see drag queens out in public embarrassing me as a proud Black Gay Man, how do I deal with it and why do they do that stuff [dress in drag] in the public?

Boyfriend listen, save yourself. It is a person's birthright in this country to explore the right and pursuit of happiness. Those drag queens are the ones that paved the way for so many other brothers. The DL brothers couldn't be who they were if it wasn't for the Stonewall Era, check yourself before a drag queen wrecks yourself. Let brothers be themselves, dressing in drag works for some while being thugged out works for others. At the end of the day -- ***IT'S ALL DRAG***.

I see brothers at grocery stores, banks, the library, and on campus. Why can't brothers speak outside of the clubs, bookstores, or sex parties?

The one thing you have to remember is, we are not comfortable in every setting and everyone doesn't know who or what our sexuality is. Try nodding your head at him first, just as a token of acknowledgment and go from there. Some brothers are just waiting for you to speak, so go and holla at him.

Got a question for Miss Sequoia, email it to us at: *mojaevans@hotmail.com*



SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

SEQUOIA MAGAZINE
WILL NEVER FORGET.
We mourn the lost of thousands
of people who lost their life on that day.
American will never be the same,
for brothers died on that day as well.
- - Montee Jamal Evans

Beloved brothers, rest in peace...

Wind Beneath My Wings

It must have been cold there in my shadow
To never have sunlight on your face
You were content to let me shine, that's your way
You always walked a step behind
So I was the one with all the glory
While you were the one with all the strength.
A beautiful face without a name, for so long
A beautiful smile to hide the pain

Did you ever know that you're my hero
And everything I would like to be
If I can fly higher than an eagle
You are the wind beneath my wings

It might have appeared to go unnoticed
But I've got it all here in my heart
I want you to know I know the truth
Of course I know it
I would be nothing with out you

Did you ever know that you're my hero
And everything I would like to be
If I can fly higher than an eagle
You are the wind beneath my wings

Fly, fly, fly away
You let me fly so high
Oh, fly, fly
So high against the sky
So high I almost touch the sky
Thank you, thank you, thank god for you
The wind beneath my wings

on one of the deacons. I had a girlfriend at the time.

Well, one weekend I went to stay over his house with my girlfriend. Since he was very religious, he made her sleep upstairs with his daughter and had me stay in the bedroom with him to watch me. For all intense purposes, I attacked him. Him and I was lying in bed and I kept touching him on the sly until finally I touched him and he didn't move my hand. I went from there.

We eventually got into a relationship, it lasted four years. He supported me all through college and he remained married while we were together. We remain friends today.

SM: Why did it end? Well, for me, it was all a web of deceit. While he had a wife, I had a girlfriend. I started feeling guilty and I had to come to terms with who I was and where I was going in life.

SM: So, what happened? We had to call it quits, our lives were headed in different directions. Now, my first boyfriend was Michael. I loved him so much. He took me to my first Adult bookstore and I saw my first Adult video with him. The challenge was, he had a girlfriend and so did I. They [girlfriends] never knew that our closeness was well beyond "*boys hanging out*", we were lovers.

SM: How long did that last? Well, I had come to terms that I wanted to come to Atlanta pre-Olympics to take advantage of the graphic design opportunities that existed. Michael did not want to leave Philadelphia -- so I did.

SM: How was the move? Absolutely traumatizing, I had moved here at the age of 22 to work for this minority graphic design group. The first day of work, I was told that I was not needed.

Now you must understand, the only reason I moved and spent all of my money was to work for this company that sold me this dream that they would hire me once I got here.

SM: So, what did you do? Actually, the sisters [lesbians] rescued me, they were my saving grace. I love to spin records and play CDs, so they paid me to play at their parties and other events.

SM: How did you make it, living in this big city by yourself? Some people would believe that I did have a job. I got up every morning, put on a suit and beat the streets looking for one.

SM: What made you start EM Designs Group? I knew I was going to have my own company. I am so passionate about graphic design and giving people an image just from a conversation of them telling me what they want it to look like. It's exciting to see someone's face after I return with an image they "told" me about.

SM: What do you care about the most? My friendships, since I am an only child, all I had was me. So, my friends make my family. What they think; what they say; and how they feel is so important for me.

SM: What organizations in our community have you worked with? That's a big question. I have done graphic design work for Second Sunday of Atlanta, In The Life Atlanta, Brothers Back-to-Back, National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum, Venus Magazine, SpeakFire, ZAMI, Fatomi, Damron, and so many other organizations.

SM: What is your favorite quote? Make it happen!

SM: What fuels you daily? My strength and staying power is the relationship I have with my mother. She is my best friend. She is involved in every part of my life. Knowing everything that she has been through, fuels me to make it and realize that failing is not an option.

SM: OK, when the history books are written on this era in our community, what would you want said about you and EM Designs Group? That we spoke life to our people. I want it to say that we always presented truth and empowerment for same gender loving people of African descent to act now. I also want the history books to show that I gave back and did my share.

SM: On the last page of the magazine, I write a piece titled, "*This Is Where We Are*," in your eyes, where are we as a community? Our brothers are lost, we are separated, angry, and hurting. We must return to our first love. If we can't love ourselves, we can't love each other. We have to love the God within first.

SM: Any last words. I am thinking of Patti LaBelle's song, "*You Are My Friend*." My favorite part starts with, "*I see the world with brand new eyes, your love has made me realize, my future looks so bright to me because of people like you...*" Thank you for this interview.

SM: No, thank you for being a part of the brotherhood and giving us the best of who and what you are. You're welcome.

www.emdesignsgroup.com

SM: Where do you see NAESM in five years? Well, we'd like to be in our own building, offering an array of services. We want to open a clinic eventually and diversify our funding streams. It is my hope that HIV will go away, when it does, I want to have funding sources that will sustain the organization once the epidemic has subsided.

SM: Where would you say we are as a community of same gender loving brothers of African descent? We're not there yet. We don't have the degree of unity, togetherness, and brotherly love that will sustain us. It is my hope that our national program, African American Men United Against AIDS will start the work of bringing brothers from all over the country together to not only fight HIV in their community, but build bridges of hope for our young brothers that are just coming along. I hope to see brothers dropping their individual agendas and come together more.

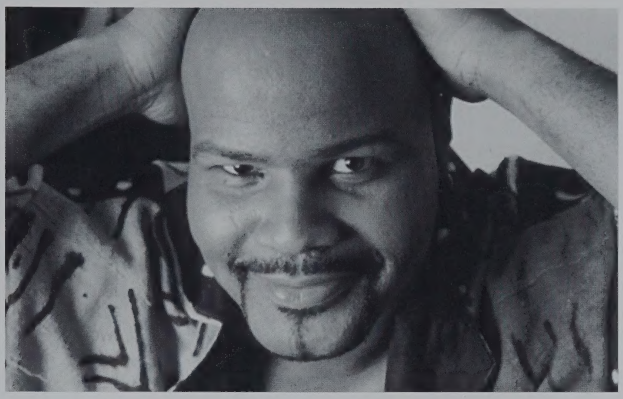
SM: Any last words? Yes, when we started AESM, I worked for two years without getting paid at all. Our first grant was $2,000 from Funds for Southern Communities. We have done a lot to get to where we are right now. We have had to do a lot of sacrificing. And even though our current budget is $1.9 million, that is nothing compared to all the work still needing to be done. We all have to do our part and I can only hope that ***Sequoia Magazine*** serves as another vehicle to bring our community of brothers together.

SM: Well, thanks for that, we'll do the best we can with what we have and thank you for this interview. You're welcome.

www.naesmonline.org

SM

This Is Where We Are



As I think about all the places life has taken me, from dropping out of high school; getting my GED; acquiring my college degree; leaving St. Louis; and beginning again with this magazine. I can only believe that living my life exactly as I have has helped me serve in the many roles I have been given an opportunity to be a part of.

I have sat on organization's board of directors, cleaned fast food restaurant parking lots, taught Wellness Classes in St. Louis' Housing Projects, and I still feel there is so much more to do. As I interviewed Archbishop Bean as well as Brother's Cook and Carn, I wondered where they thought we were as a brotherhood. All responses seemed to be reaching for us to do more.

So, I hope you brothers will commit to doing more; being more; giving more; and sharing of yourselves more. ***Sequoia Magazine*** was started with the intentions of giving brothers back to themselves. I believe we have the capacity to tun things around in our community.

On Newsweek's January 28, 2002 Cover, in big and bold print, they have "**The New Black Power!**" The article speaks of Richard Parsons, Kenneth Chenault, and Stanley O'Neal; all brothers and soon to be or currently serving as Chief Executive Officers of Fortune 500 companies. I thought about my dreams and aspirations: **to build a media empire for same gender loving men of African descent**. I also begin to think about my love, passion, and commitment to this brotherhood and knew that it was well within my reach.

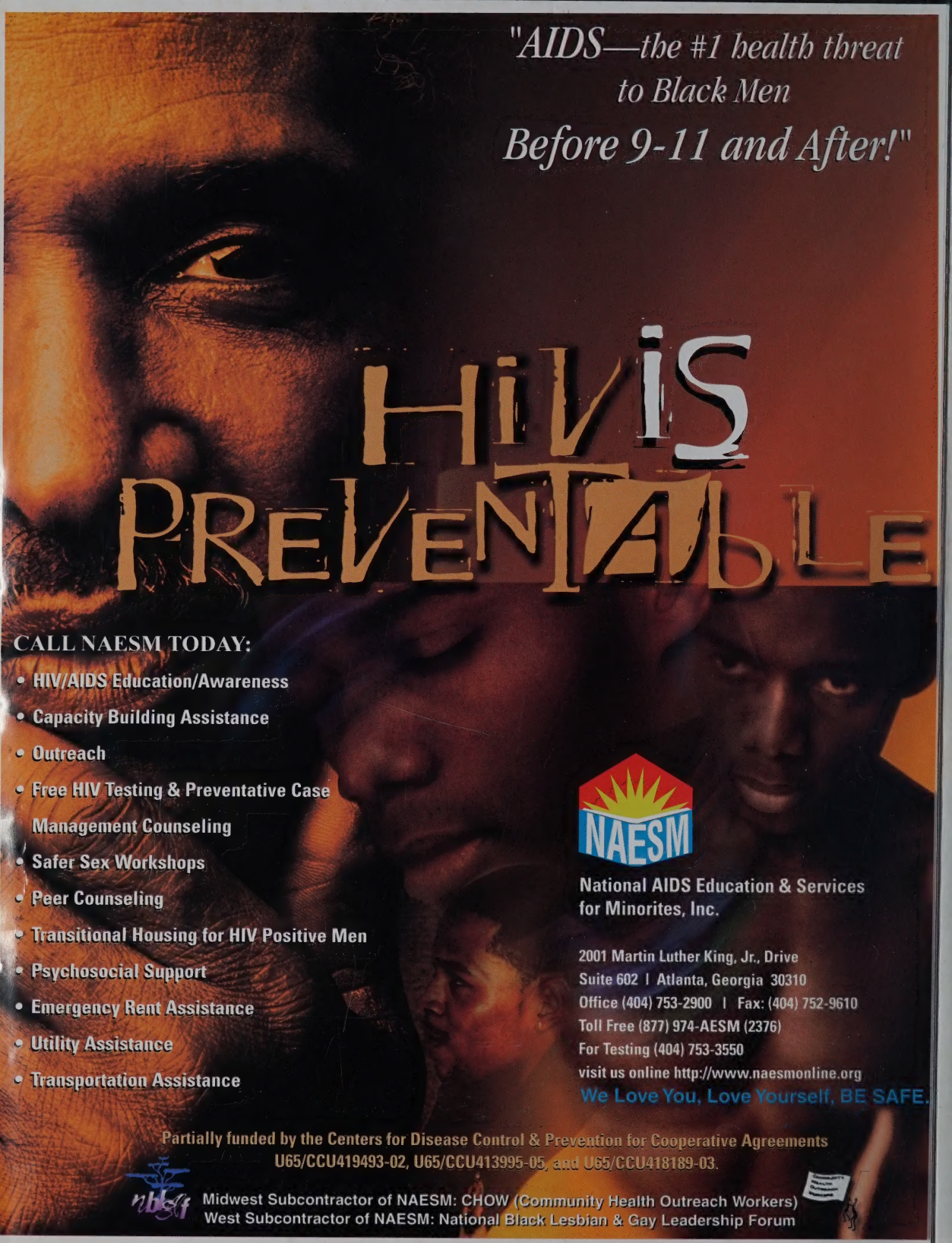
So, I know that where we are right now is finding our place. We are spending countless hours trying to ask for a space at the table of Black Men; getting a seat at the table in the overall community; and navigating spaces that don't affirm us culturally.

Well, it is time beloved brothers for us to rise up. We have to get to the table knowing that our places have already been set. There is no better time than now; no better place than where you are right now; and no other brother to do it than you.

You have an entire brotherhood of same gender loving men of African descent in pockets of this country willing to put their lives on the line for you. I'm not saying you have to be out, I'm saying you have to **Get Up! Get Out! and Do Something!!!**

Much love for you and to you beloveds.

See you next month...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